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Volume 3, No. 4 • April 2006

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Spotlight

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The ALA-APA Presidential Candidates Speak

Elections will be held in the spring! The candidates for ALA President are Loriene Roy, Professor at the University of Texas at Austin and William Crowe, Director of the University of Kansas' (KU) Kenneth Spencer Research Library. As the victor will also serve as ALA-APA President, the candidates were asked, "How would you would represent ALA-APA as President in 2007–2008?" Here are their responses.

Bill Crowe

Presidential Blog: <http://billcrowe.blogspot.com>

ALA-APA fills a need long-felt by many of us: a body that can serve as an effective advocate for a wide range of issues, many of them economic, that affect people who work in libraries.

My life experience includes years of exposure to how many such issues can be handled in a collective bargaining environment, even as ALA-APA is not a union, of course. My dad was a member (and sometime steward) in the Teamsters (he sold meat for a living) and my mother was an AFSCME member (she was a senior support staff member at Boston [MA] City Hospital). Too, when I took my first professional job—at Boston Public Library—I became a member of our unaffiliated union and quickly became a steward. It was an eye-opening and very beneficial experience.

Later in my career, I came to understand from firsthand exposure to the issues the roles of administrators/managers in promoting a positive work environment, but, more important, how to draw in others to help identify issues that need attention, and how best to arrive at solutions.

I learned early on, then, the importance of understanding the wide range of issues that can affect the quality of the day-to-day lives of people at work, how to set priorities in addressing them, and how to communicate effectively—and with respect. I came to understand that in the end the goal is to seek common ground whenever possible in order to arrive at outcomes that benefit both the

Loriene Roy

Presidential Web Site: <http://lorieneroy.com>

If ALA focuses on addressing the needs of libraries, ALA-APA was established to focus on providing support for library employees. Established only in 2001, ALA-APA is still finding its stride and developing its services. I believe that ALA-APA has the potential to improve the daily working lives of library employees. We need to nurture and support the organization to achieve this potential.

As a librarian educator I am involved in day-to-day recruitment, retention, educating, advising, and career advising of graduate students. I have managed federally funded scholarship programs and been centrally involved in diversity initiatives including Spectrum. ALA-APA also needs hands-on advocacy of its mission and objectives in order for it to achieve its full potential.

I think ALA-APA's President needs to lead efforts raise the visibility of ALA-APA. ALA members need to know the mission of ALA-APA, how it is organized, and the activities it is engaged in that impact them. I would provide educators in LIS programs with information about ALA-APA that they could share in their classes and with their ALA student chapters. Similarly, I would work with the Chapter Relations Office to ensure that ALA members would receive information about ALA-APA through their state ALA chapters. I would work to highlight the role of ALA-APA in supporting National Library Workers Day and would endeavor to contribute additional relevant

employing institution and those who work on its behalf to serve society.

In ALA-APA's early years, we who contribute to it and belong to ALA and who may be in leadership roles for both, of course must be attentive to the differences in mission (and implications for such things as ALA's tax status), but also to the natural linkages that we see all around us.

There is much work to do. I can recall vividly the admonitions of Herb White, a long time leader in our community and from whose teaching I benefited as a student at Indiana University: We must be able to make the case for what our work is worth – in economic and other terms – and to do so with verve and imagination, ready always to speak forcefully about issues that matter.

If I am elected, I pledge to be worthy of my heritage. If nothing else, I want to be able in the end to look Professor White in the eye!

articles to ALA-APA's newsletter, *Library Worklife*. I would promote this publication to LIS students, faculty, and practitioners and encourage LIS students and faculty to incorporate content from *Library Worklife* as course readings. I would work to increase general awareness of ALA-APA by including references to ALA-APA in publications, presentations, and everyday conversation.

ALA has focused on accreditation of master's programs in library and information science. Students typically complete twelve or more graduate courses in these programs and receive the entry-level degree. The best among the graduates are aware from day one of the need to seek continuing education. ALA-APA seeks to fill the need for continuous education by certifying individuals who have acquired field centered experience as well as the completion of additional formal coursework. The ALA-APA President can assist in monitoring the impact of the certification programs initiated within ALA-APA by tracking the programs, the students and the influence of these programs on their professional career paths. In addition to supporting certification programs such as the Certified Public Librarian Administrator Program, I would seek to collaborate with continuing education providers such as WebJunction.org to support the development and delivery of training to librarians.

As ALA and ALA-APA President, I would serve as a spokesperson for the value of librarians to the general public. This is a critical stance as we continue the fight to increase salaries and benefits. I would collaborate on locating and sponsoring research endeavors that would help us develop cogent, convincing arguments addressing the need to improve librarian compensation. This research would include studying the role of unions, compensation issues in our 'sister' professions such as nursing and social work, new findings in comparable worth, and how these might or might not contribute to improved working conditions.

One of my three ALA Presidential candidate platform issues is workplace wellness. I have already assembled an Envisioning Circle of visionary thinkers who can help me realize tangible results in the area of workplace wellness. This issue impacts all individuals who work in libraries as it focuses on how we can create and maintain safe workplaces. In addition, attention on workplace wellness challenges all of us to discover and follow healthy life patterns. These attitudes and practices can lead to increased morale and assist us in maintaining productive lives to and

through retirement.

Winners of the SirsiDynix ALA-APA Award Spread the Word about Salaries

By Gwyneth Mibeck

In April and May we will feature the winners of the 2006 SirsiDynix-ALA-APA Award for Outstanding Achievement in Promoting Salaries and Status for Library Workers. This month we interviewed James Fish, Director of Baltimore County Public Libraries.

Next month Ellissa Cadillic, President of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1526 in Boston, Massachusetts, will describe how the union advocated for library support staff.

James Fish had a plan: to increase the status and salaries of library workers within Baltimore County Public Libraries. His strategy can serve as a model for libraries in desperate need of salary increases.

Describe your process of advocating for better wages.

Several years ago we did a study and put together a very good outside consultant case. An outside consultant had a database already established and a custom survey looking at other libraries. The case was quite compelling. It showed us how far behind we were. What we did then was to take it to the county to give us resources to make changes. We had a very supportive board. We felt we've always had a great staff doing wonderful work for decades. The biggest weakness of the library was that the wage and salary plan was not competitive.

How does the library request a pay increase in Baltimore County?

The county executive needs to initiate a recommendation in the budget process. We had a county executive who was very supportive. He and his staff looked very carefully at the proposal and shared our concerns. We had developed a good relationship with the county executive and felt the best way to proceed was through conversation and information support.

The difficulty with the pay plan had its origins some years ago when the state had financial problems. It passed some of them on to the counties in Maryland in 1993-1994 when there was an economic downturn. This created a situation of stagnant salary growth.

Describe the survey and results.

We looked at which positions were furthest behind. There were 86, which were upgraded more than others. We also looked at longevity increases. There are 10 steps in the pay plan, and steps 7-10 were longevity. These were given in 5-year increments. We proposed annual merit steps instead of five-year longevity steps to accelerate an individual's ability to move to higher levels faster.

We had also done a couple of things over the years when we weren't able to get a considerable addressing of the issue. We did a supplemental pay of 1%, which was not built into the base. For two years in a row both full and part-time staff members were issued checks for 1% near the end of the fiscal year.

Shortly before that we were successful in changing things for the part-timers. We were looking at a 50% turnover rate on part-timers, an epidemic. We requested additional funding from the county to set up a different pay plan, with quarterly eligibility for step increases instead of annual. We needed to reward people and hold on to them. This change was really helpful. We saw a major reduction in the turnover rate, from 50% to 20%. I am really pleased with how that worked.

What is training like in your library?

We provide specific training for individual jobs and general training for customer service. New people must feel comfortable with the entire organization, not just one part. This is quite a challenge when we work in 16 different buildings spread over 600 square miles. We invest time and money in staff development activities. For example, 32 people went to the Public Library Association Conference in Boston, a "small army". They get a lot out of things like that because they put a lot into it. We provide some support for people working on the MLS, and provide financial assistance for continuing education.

What is a metaphor to describe the process?

The *Little Engine that Could*. We didn't give up. It took a couple of years before we were able to get what I considered a really good hearing but when that happened other things just flowed from that. It is never easy when you're trying to do something like this. It requires a lot of hard work, first of all putting the case together, finding out where you are and where you need to be. Compromise is necessary. One must phase things in, work with people, understanding an elected official's circumstance.

What advice can you give?

- Understand the audience and the parts of the case that will be most successful and work on each audience. What is it that you need to do that is reasonable? Not reasonable? People don't get attracted to your case because of the financial aspects.
- Remember that salaries are always relative. One can always find someone worse or better off than you. One needs to know what is going on in your particular circumstance.
- Make sure you're talking to not just librarians. Look outside and get information. Look at retail kinds of activities and what ideas they have. Organizations that do not have the money to conduct research can use these ideas. The work of [Paco Underhill](#), retail consultant, is an example. His job is to help businesses create more sales by studying how customers behave. Libraries can use this information to better serve the public.
- The best thing people can do is have access to really knowledgeable Human Resource professionals who have been through this before. If not, maybe they can get some pro-bono work from a company or talk to workers and get advice on how to write a Request for Proposals (RFP) and get the right kind person to do the work.

How do you reward or give recognition to your employees?

We do a lot for the recognition of employees. One approach is the alternative rewards system. Each manager is given money to use when they have an employee who has done something really outstanding, or who finishes an amazingly difficult project. If the employee likes movie tickets, for example, he/she may receive them. It's something to say, "I noticed."

What is on your suggested reading list?

Nelson, Bob. *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*. New York: Workman Publ. Co., 1994.

Excellent work, Jim!

We would love to have your [feedback](#) on this article!

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