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## Second Annual Conference within a Conference for Library Support Staff at ALA Annual

Also called the **Empowerment Conference**, the Conference Within a Conference will be held Saturday and Sunday, June 24 and 25, 2006 in New Orleans, LA, during the 2006 American Library Association Annual Conference. The theme is "Taking Charge in a Sea of Change."

This year's event will offer library support staff a choice of four program tracks, which will address issues in professional development, personal development, skills development, and work/life balance.

Participants will be able to attend workshops on a variety of topics including reference services, children's services, circulation, health & safety, internal customer service, management skills, technology, advocacy, outreach, bookmobiles, program planning and career development. Don't miss this exciting, history-making event!

There will be opportunities to network with colleagues from across the nation as well as hear dynamic speakers. Tour the world's largest library exhibition and attend the ALA opening general session. Be inspired at the kick-off by a leader in the library community while being motivated to take charge in the sea of change at the closing luncheon. You'll come away energized, renewed and refreshed.

**Read Jennifer Kutzik's reflections from the first Conference in Chicago, IL, in 2005:**

### Unos in Chicago

#### 2005 ALA Annual Conference Filled with Firsts

**By Jennifer Kutzik**

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A trip to Chicago in June can be full of untold surprises or as predictable as lightning bugs on a sultry summer night. For many attendees of the ALA Annual Conference of 2005, the Windy City proved to be filled with firsts.

- **LIGHTS OUT:** The first conference blackout was caused by a series of unfortunate events. Malfunction of a buried cable triggered a small explosion and a large fire in an electrical sub-station. On Friday evening at 8:40 p.m., the enormous McCormick Place Convention Center and the adjacent Hyatt Regency Hotel were abruptly dropped into darkness. Conference event and exhibit preparations bleated to a halt. Although the power was restored shortly after midnight, many systems needed rebooting or restarting, and the massive air conditioners struggled to offset the 95-degree heat wave. The largest-ever number of conference registrants was greeted with long lines, hotter-than-usual meeting rooms and frayed nerves all around. By noon on Saturday, most systems were back to normal, the lines were reduced, and the conference of 2005 was finally underway.
- **EMPOWERING SUPPORT STAFF:** The first Conference Within A Conference (CWAC) debuted on Saturday morning, June 25. Attendees were greeted on the Grand Concourse with directional banners broadcasting the theme of "Empowering Library Support Staff for the 21 st Century." Two full days of sessions and events featured noted speakers such as Linda Slusar, Maureen Sullivan, Mary Chute and ALA

Past-Presidents Mitch Freedman and Carla Hayden. Included in the conference registration was a networking breakfast, lunch with motivational speaker Juan Ortiz, a free pass to the exhibits and admission to the Opening General Session address by U.S. Senator Barack Obama. Over 170 library workers were registered, while over 600 regular conference-goers indicated they would be attending one or more CWAC sessions or events. Designed to provide first-time or relatively new ALA conference attendees with a smaller, more structured experience, the featured sessions were held in one central location and clearly marked. During the concurrent session times, attendees could choose from 6–9 programs, which were clearly highlighted in the CWAC conference booklet. Programming topics ranged from reference services, children’s services, circulation, health & safety, internal customer service, management skills, technology, advocacy, outreach, bookmobiles, program planning and career development. The conference also featured table talk discussions on a variety of topics including diversity, community outreach programming, young adult services and how to become more active in state and national professional organizations. To keep the “juice” flowing after the CWAC was over, Web access to all program materials was included in the registration fees, plus 1-year access or CD-ROM and Web access can be purchased by visiting: <http://www.ala.org/annual> or by calling ALA Conference Services at 800-545-2433, ext. 3223. Preliminary indications from ALA are favorable for a repeat of this groundbreaking conference at the New Orleans Annual Conference in June 2006 and planning is underway for a one-day pre-conference workshop for the San Antonio Midwinter meeting in January 2006.

- **STRUTTING THEIR STUFF:** The first World Book Cart Drill Team competition attracted a large and vocal audience of supporters. The drill teams consisted of 8-12 library staffers who marched in formation pushing stylized book carts. Observing the lively music, theme costumes and dance steps stolen from MTV, many conference-goers stopped by to watch “just 10 minutes” and stayed until the winners were announced. The 14 teams each had 5 minutes to show their stuff and were scored by 3 judges, fueled during the competition by margarita jellybeans. The winning team was “Dewey, et al for my Baby” comprised of students and recent graduates of the School of Library and Information Studies at UW-Madison. They wore costumes that converted to hot pink and zebra print cart decorations during their routine. Performing to the music of Huey Lewis and The News, songs like “Hip to Be Square” and “Doing it all for my Baby” took on new library meanings. The event sponsor, DEMCO, supplied book carts for the event and awarded gold, silver and bronze full-sized library carts to the winners. But everyone who stopped to observe part or all of this premier competition left with the gift of a smile and a lasting memory of very UN-“Marion the Librarian” performers. “These drill teams are a great way for library staff to speak up and speak out for library services in a fun way,” said ALA Past President Sarah Long, who served as color commentator for the event.
- **WHUMP-CRACK:** My first accident on a conference shuttle-bus really took me by surprise. After riding hundreds of miles through jam-packed convention cities like New York, San Francisco and New Orleans without incident, a jarring “whump” signaled unwelcome contact between a gigantic iron support of the elevated train track (known in Chicago as “The El”) and the side of our bus. Almost in slow motion, a diagonal crack raced across a side window and then the big bus jerked to a halt. The driver must have killed the engine by stomping on the brakes and the bus was now without lights or air-conditioning. I had just remarked to my aisle-mate (the bus was so full that we were standing in the aisle) that the conference shuttle-buses were a real lifesaver in large cities like Chicago. A split-second later, we were grabbing each other in an attempt to stay upright. We had nearly completed the ride from the McCormick Convention Center to the heart of downtown during heavier than normal weekend traffic due to the Taste of Chicago event. As the shocked riders took a close-up look at the massive rivets on the vertical support, one person stage-whispered, “He’ll pay for that.” There were no injuries to any passengers that I could see, and since the incident occurred in front of my conference hotel, I quickly exited the bus.
- **UNO, DUE, LOU:** For the food-lover in me, visiting Chicago always rates a red alert! I dream of Frango mints, beef dogs and of course, the ultimate decadence of deep-dish pizza. Mama Mia! Did you know that Americans eat approximately 100 acres of pizza each day, or 350 slices per second? But who really makes the best pizza in town? Residents of the Windy city maintain steadfast allegiances to 3 top destinations: Pizzeria Uno, Pizzeria Due (pronounced Doo-A) and Lou Malnati’s. Having previously eaten at Unos and Dues, it was time to try Lou’s. In addition to being named the number one pizza in Chicago by AOL City Guide, they boast their pizzas are made according to the family’s original, five-decades-old, deep-dish pizza recipe. That distinction is important, because Lou’s dad, Rudy, used to work for Ike Sewell (the owner of Uno’s and Due’s and considered the originator of Chicago deep dish pizza). Some say Rudy stole Ike’s crust recipe when he left Unos. Nevertheless, when it came time to sample our pie, we weren’t disappointed – just overwhelmed by a pizza the size of a truck tire dubbed “The Deluxe.” The menu described it as “Sausage, mushroom, onion & green peppers: All that is good.” As the steaming pan was delivered to our table, I searched in vain for the meat, the Italian pork sausage (after all, we were in the Midwest, home to all things pork!) My brother, a Chicago resident and Lou aficionado, pushed aside the myriad of toppings to reveal a solid layer of sausage. Unbelievable! It brought tears to my Hoosier-raised eyes. Suffice it to say that after only one wedge, I was too stuffed for even a tiny Frango mint for dessert. The true genius of the sausage layer became crystal clear when I read about Lou’s new “Crustless Pizza.” For those who are gluten intolerant or following a low-carbohydrate diet, this pizza “crust” is made totally from sausage and then topped with tomato sauce and fresh mozzarella cheese. It’s another Chicago first! You can read all about it on the Web, or even order your own!  
[www.loumalnatis.com](http://www.loumalnatis.com).

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## University of California Library Technicians Receive 8.6% Raise

A University of California [press release](#) dated February 16, 2006, states that clerical workers, which includes library assistants and technicians, “will receive wage increases of approximately 12% over the next three years, contingent upon state funding...UC’s library assistants and other clerical employees will receive additional market equity increases for the first two years of the agreement to help address salary lags.”

Library employees are covered under a collective bargaining agreement with the [Coalition of University Employees \(CUE\)](#). This is the latest ratification of a settlement signed in December 2005. CUE, on behalf of clerical staff, has argued and collected data for several years about pay inequities and the high cost of living and noted wide differences between their salaries and those of California State University employees.<sup>1</sup> CUE reported that the average library assistant II salary was less than \$30,000.<sup>2</sup>

Library employees invited past ALA president Maurice J. (Mitch) Freedman to speak with them in October 2005 about strategies for continuing their campaign. You may watch the [video](#), via QuickTime software. At the beginning of 2005, a neutral arbiter found that UC had sufficient profit to give raises to 14,500 low-paid clerical workers.<sup>3</sup> In fact, there was evidence that funds had been diverted that were intended for clerical worker raises. The arbiter, Gerald McKay, recommended that the employees be given retroactive pay. He also found that “the university has given pay boosts in the form of ‘equity and individual wage boosts for at least half of its employees,’ including faculty, lecturers, librarians and academic student employees, whose salaries depend more on state funds than do those of clerical workers.”

The University of California-Riverside [Human Resources Salary at a Glance](#) says, “For classifications in the Library Assistant series, an additional 5.1% increase to the step-based salary structure, resulting in a total 8.6% base-building increase.”

### References

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3. Ibid.

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