

National Library Legislative Day 2004 a success!

National Library Legislative Day, cosponsored by the District of Columbia Library Association (DCLA) and ALA, is held every year in May to bring librarians, library trustees, board members, and other library friends to Washington, D.C. to talk with their representatives and senators about issues of concern to the library community. This year's events brought more than 500 librarians and friends of libraries from 49 states to Capitol Hill to advocate on behalf of libraries and library programs. Nearly 60 academic and research librarians attended the ACRL Legislative Luncheon on Monday, which included an advocacy session specific to their issues.

Each year ALA's Washington Office prepares information on key legislative issues for discussion with Legislative Day participants at an all-day briefing. The following day, library advocates bring our messages to their members of Congress and they cover issues, including copyright and intellectual property, appropriations and funding for library programs, and issues relating to access to government information as well as the Internet and telecommunications.

FOLUSA gives an annual public service award on National Library Legislative Day to a member of Congress who provides leadership on and demonstrates commitment to important library issues. This year, FOLUSA presented two awards: Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) and Rep. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) both were honored at the Congressional Reception. Feingold and Sanders each delivered rousing speeches to the crowd, reinforcing their commitment to scaling the USA PATRIOT Act so that it does not infringe on civil liberties.

After attending National Library Legislative Day events, participants are encouraged to maintain and promote the relationships they built with their representatives and

senators through regular communication with legislators' offices in Washington, D.C., as well as with staff in their local district offices. We also encourage participants to invite their legislators to local library events being held in their communities.

The ALA Washington Office and DCLA express our thanks to the attendees of this year's National Library Legislative Day events. The events provide an important opportunity for each participant to educate senators and representatives about all the terrific programs at your library and on issues that are important to the larger library community. Your Congressional representatives want to know how libraries and library programs impact the lives of their constituents—and who better to tell them about the continuing importance of libraries than a strong group of library advocates?

The ALA Washington Office is continually reminded by comments from House and Senate staffs of just how important the presence of library supporters is on Capitol Hill.

Staff will say, "People visited me in May and talked about . . . libraries, copyright, school libraries, government information," whatever the subject is that you are discussing. This proves to us that Congress understands the message delivered by constituents who are interested in the subject matter and can be counted upon to pay attention to Congressional action. ■

(Supervising," continued from page 308)

These suggestions and bits of advice are meant to smooth the way and help guide you as you begin developing that inevitable experience of your own.

Notes

1. William Oncken Jr., *Managing Management Time: Who's Got the Monkey* (EnglewoodCliffs: Prentice-Hall 1984). ■

Bernadette Murphy is communications specialist at ALA's Washington Office, e-mail: bmurphy@alawash.org