

Barbara Immroth and Courtney Young

# Meet the candidates

Vote in the election this spring

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates (both are ACRL members) for ALA President, and *C&RL News* is pleased to publish their responses. Each candidate was given 1,200 words in which she could respond to six questions and contribute an optional opening statement; the responses are identified under each question.

## Opening statement from Barbara Immroth

Thank you for inviting me to participate in this discussion of ACRL issues during the 2013 ALA election campaign. I will be attending ACRL 2013 in Indianapolis and welcome further discussion with you then.

**1. What do you see as the most important issues facing our profession today, particularly for academic and research librarians? With respect to these issues, what should ALA do to address them? What leadership skills you would bring to ALA to move the association forward?**

**Immroth:** Funding is a major issue facing our profession, whether local or national many libraries are facing major loss of revenue, which leads to cuts in resources and staffing.

Major shifts in technology are a huge issue, requiring new purchases of hardware and software with which to supply needed resources to library users.



Barbara Immroth



Courtney Young

Librarians have the challenge of meeting changing user expectations/needs and also of changing the expectations of users toward the digital formats now available. Shrinking personnel budgets force remaining staff to perform more efficiently and cut wanted services.

ALA needs to continue advocacy for libraries and for legislative funding for libraries to secure resources and staffing, including the best technology to deliver digital resources that users need.

**Young:** The first issue that comes to mind is funding challenges, especially a decrease in available grant monies, state funding, and a resistance to raising tuition in a time when the value of higher education is being questioned. This comes hand-in-hand with making the connections to value and demonstrating the value of libraries, especially on campus (collections budgets, space, hours versus staffing, etc.). Assessment is crucial in this

regard, and ALA and ACRL need to continue providing the tools and support that help libraries measure their impact on student learning. As ALA president, I would support the development of initiatives to teach academic librarians how to advocate for the resources they need. I would also investigate new partnerships that would increase funding sources for higher education at all levels.

Another concern is the changing role of academic librarians. ALA should be a leader in providing affordable, timely, and accessible professional development opportunities. As ALA president, I will strive to place ALA at the center of a librarianship dialogue hub that supports substantive interactions: networking, conversation, collaboration, and learning. Librarians and library workers should be inspired and invigorated as a result in participating in ALA-supported and -motivated connections.

I am an academic librarian with a strong record of effective communication and collaboration. As a library manager, I have a strong record of advocacy at the local level, working in a complex organization with multiple priorities, and a successful advocate for the programs and resources that are important to my students, such as helping faculty understand the changing world of information and advocating for student support services. Within the association I have a proven track record of leadership and collaboration, and I have developed an understanding of the association and its finances and budgeting through my service on the Budget Analysis and Review Committee (BARC) and the Executive Board. These are the qualities needed to advance and support the professional development initiatives for advocacy and continuing education.

**2. ACRL has adopted a Plan for Excellence with goals that heighten the impact that librarians have upon the Value of Academic Libraries, Student Learning, and the Research and Scholarly Environment. In what ways would you, as ALA president, work with ACRL and its part-**

**ners to advance or promote these goals?**

**Immroth:** As ALA president I will work with ACRL and its partners to promote the Plan for Excellence goals that heighten the impact those librarians have upon the Value of Academic Libraries, Student Learning, and the Research and Scholarly Environment. As a tenured full professor at a large research university for years, I have had experiences that I can draw upon as examples to use in advancing and promoting the value of academic librarians. For instance, the Geology librarian who takes his truck to the warehouses where energy companies store their no longer wanted proprietary information that they offer to the library for the taking and comes back to campus with unique research materials. The Latin American librarian who gathered unique materials from Central and South America, the vast humanities treasures gathered in the Humanities Research Center and the LBJ Library and Archives that now attract scholars from around the world to campus. Living and working within walking distance of these treasures has given me the opportunity to see many fine academic librarians working with students and scholars who are exploring these academic riches and creating new knowledge.

**Young:** ACRL's plan reflects my own approach to academic librarianship, using information literacy as a means of weaving together reference services, academic advising, technology, and diversity. Every day I'm promoting the role of the librarian in student learning and work with faculty to more fully integrate our services into the achievement of student learning outcomes. Therefore, I can use my own experience to elucidate what it means to "transform student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations" and model the role of an academic librarian as a change agent. Additionally, I believe that the ACRL Value of Academic Libraries report can be a model for other parts of the association and an approach to speaking with new library-related partners. Collaboration in libraries is essential, and it's vital to the

work we do in ALA. I would welcome the opportunity to work with ACRL and extend that collaboration with other units in the association, state library associations, library schools, and library-related partners.

**3. Given the digital environment enveloping libraries and the opportunities and challenges it presents, how would you address issues such as open access options for ALA publications, library access to and lending of e-books, and digital preservation of content?**

**Immroth:** Given the current digital environment that promises to grow even faster and larger in the future, I am helping to prepare graduate students to work with and manage these incredible opportunities and challenges. Several students that I am supervising in their Professional Experience and Report before they graduate in May are working on projects in the digital arena. One is implementing a DAMS across campus under the field supervision of Rachael Appel, digital asset manager. The project is designed to improve image retrieval across campus with standardized metadata, guidelines, and workflows for management. The student is surveying the increasing number of digital objects, technology obsolescence, and other preservation risks for digital media.

Another student is processing born-digital materials in the Walter Cronkite papers by describing the objects, migrating them to preservation formats, and ingesting them into the digital repository, making previously inaccessible files available for research use. Another student is working with Amy Rushing, university library digital access services, to create comprehensive METS based metadata guidelines for still images. Another student is working with the Austin Fanzine Project, started by Jenifer Hecker in summer 2012 to digitize Hecker's *Geek Weekly* fanzine.

Preparing these student to go into the professional digital workforce, gives me a better background for such issues as the open access options for ALA publications, e-books access, and digital preservation of content

that will certainly be on the ALA agenda in the coming years.

**Young:** Libraries have an even more critical role in ensuring lasting access to digital content. ALA has an opportunity to be a leader and a strong supporter on these digital environment fronts. As president, I would advocate for building on the Digital Content and Libraries Working Group's work and would continue in the example of Maureen Sullivan's role as a formidable spokesperson for libraries as essential providers of digital content. In addition, I would advocate for greater collaboration among ALA divisions, round tables, and units who are not working on digital initiatives.

When it comes to ALA publications and the impact of access versus inaccessibility, I think ALA should consider if ALA-produced publications should be open access (as distinguished from those published by ALA Publishing) and if these are opportunities to support and encourage ALA divisions and round tables to go open access. ACRL is a leader in transitioning to open-access publishing. ALA needs to gather data regarding which association publications are open access and which are not, then determine how committed we are to the principle of open access. As an association, we could make a strong statement for open access if we as an association have 100 percent participation.

**4. As ALA president, you will be asked to address the media on a variety of issues and public policies related to libraries and to advance the association's legislative agenda. Provide an example of an active role you have played in advocating for or against a proposed local, state, or federal policy that impacts libraries.**

**Immroth:** At a White House conference in which Kids Need Libraries was selected as the top priority, I was on the team that worked tirelessly with other supporters to advocate for and promote this important issue. This was a grassroots issue that was taken to the national level by concerned librarians and library supporters. We wrote

and distributed a position paper, lobbied, and canvased delegates. Under the direction of Virginia Mathews, a longtime library advocate and supporter, I learned the three P's of advocacy—passion, persistence, and purity—for an important issue that impacts libraries and the broad community.

I have also worked on library advocacy with the state library association and participated in the TxLA Rallies: Texas Needs Libraries at the state capitol (Wear Red, Be Loud) that brought state legislators to the windows and out to the platform to speak to the assembled crowd about the value of libraries. ALA has already had similar, if somewhat more subdued, rallies.

**Young:** I've been fortunate in my career to not have major challenges from the communities I've served regarding library services. As a result, I've been able to focus my advocacy activities on more general library concerns at the state and federal level. I've signed petitions, called elected officials and asked them to support issues related to libraries, used Capwiz to voice my support for various library-related initiatives, and participated in Virtual National Library Legislative Day by contacting elected officials and advocating for important library issues.

I welcome the opportunity to be a voice for libraries at the national level and would use my experience in building coalitions to ensure that our message is effective and resonant.

### **5. What experience have you had advancing diversity in the library profession? As ALA president, how will you move forward ongoing association efforts regarding the recruitment and retention of librarians from diverse backgrounds?**

**Immroth:** At the time that a federal court ruled that universities in Texas and several other near-by states could not give financial assistance based on race/ethnicity, I was graduate advisor on our faculty and a member of the TxLA Board. I advocated to the Board to provide financial assistance to students that

the university could not provide. TxLA provided a number of scholarships for a diverse group of students to obtain their professional degrees, while that was not legally possible for the university to do, thus providing a new diverse group of professionals for the region. I am proud to have helped those students achieve their professional goals.

As a faculty member I have also recruited a diverse group of students to apply for admission when recruiting, which I have done for years, encouraging students to apply for scholarships and awards such as the Reforma scholarships. As ALA president I will continue the excellent programs that ALA already has in place—Spectrum Scholarships and Emerging Leaders. I have written IMLS grants to fund Ph.D. students and worked to diversify doctoral teaching faculty.

**Young:** As a former participant in post-graduate diversity residency program, I have a considerable amount of experience related to diversity in the library profession. I have published and presented on diversity in libraries, served on university libraries diversity committees, chaired the NMRT diversity committee, served as the ALA Executive Board liaison to the Committee on Diversity, and most recently cochaired the Student Chapters subcommittee of the ALA Spectrum Presidential Initiative.

Diversity is a major component of my campaign. ALA should do more to help the profession be representative of the communities we serve. I am interested in ALA moving beyond Spectrum to recruit and retain librarians from underrepresented groups and expand its diversity mission to highlight and promote additional forms of diversity. We need to put together the diversity efforts taking place across the association and highlight them from a portal at the top level of ALA's site. I will also advocate for the promotion of diversity-related professional development opportunities at ALA and division conferences.

### **6. Membership organizations, such as ALA and ACRL, need to demonstrate**

**their value to recruit and retain members. What does ALA need to do to keep the organization relevant to academic and research librarians, particularly those new to the profession? What ideas or strategies do you have to balance the ALA budget and to increase revenues in support of member activities?**

**Immroth:** ALA needs to continue efforts to improve the Web presence, virtual publications, and continuing education, such as the Webinars and virtual conferences, to recruit and retain new younger members, using the social media avenues with which they communicate and live on a daily basis. I'm a Student Chapter faculty advisor and a proponent of low student dues to recruit students to join and explore the association while they are in the preprofessional stage of their careers—keeping costs as low as possible in hopes of recruiting more members.

I think that ALA needs to keep a careful eye on expenditures and live within its means as the current treasurer has proposed. When we have a good year of higher revenues, spend it carefully to enhance member activities.

Thank you for reading my ideas about ALA. I look forward to discussing them more with you and ask for your vote.

**Young:** Value of membership is the foundation of my campaign. ALA needs to be more effective in communicating what it does to benefits us as academic librarians

—including the legislative agenda, diversity (Committee on Diversity, research scholarships, Spectrum), ACRL's collaboration with HRDR and *American Libraries* to promote JobLIST, NMRT's resume review service, etc. ALA and ACRL need to recruit more librarians to participate in mentoring new librarians, especially from groups that are underrepresented in the academy.

ALA is pursuing new business development opportunities. I was a member of the ALA Executive Board and BARC during the Neal-Schuman acquisition. ALA must continue to explore new revenue streams to generate income for member programs and services. As a member of BARC I pushed for the creation of the Financial Learning series (<http://connect.ala.org/node/160296>) as a resource for ALA members with fiduciary responsibility to gain a better understanding of ALA finances and increased transparency. These Webcasts provide another opportunity for the association to demonstrate membership value and should be expanded, captured in other formats, and better highlighted to all members.

The value of ALA membership will ultimately be judged by our effectiveness as an association. I believe that we will succeed only if ALA can support increasing diversity within the association, if ALA can become the premier source of professional development, and if ALA provides the tools for libraries to engage our communities as change agents. ♪

### **Additional ALA/ACRL election resources**

More information on the upcoming ALA/ACRL election, including links to previous *C&RL News* articles, is available on the ACRL election Web page at [www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/electionresults/election](http://www.ala.org/acrl/aboutacrl/electionresults/election) and the ALA election Web page at [www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/alaelection).

A podcast interview with Maggie Ferrell and Karen Williams, candidates for ACRL

vice-president/president-elect, will be available on the ACRL election site in mid-March. In addition, the candidates will participate in an online forum at 1:00 p.m. Central on March 20, 2013. Access information will be available on ACRL Insider.

Polls for the 2013 ALA/ACRL election open at 9:00 a.m. Central on March 19, 2013, and close at 11:59 p.m. on April 26, 2013.

## ACRL members running for ALA treasurer and Council in the spring 2013 election

The following ACRL members are running for ALA treasurer.

**Clara Nalli Bohrer**, Director, West Bloomfield Township Public Library, West Bloomfield Michigan

**Mario M. Gonzalez**, Library Director, Passaic Public Library, Passaic New Jersey

The following ACRL members are either nominated or petition candidates for ALA councilor. ACRL members are encouraged to vote for these candidates to increase ACRL's voice in ALA affairs.

**Craig Scott Amos**, Library Manager, Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton, Virginia

**Gladys Smiley Bell**, Peabody Librarian, Hampton University Harvey Library, Hampton, Virginia

**Elizabeth Jean Brumfield**, Distance Services Librarian, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas

**Min Chou**, Librarian I/Web Coordinator, New Jersey City University

**Dr. Karen E. Downing**, Foundation and Grants Librarian, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

**Martin L. Garnar**, Reference Services Librarian and Professor of Library Science, Regis University, Denver, Colorado

**Kathleen Hanselmann**, Chief Librarian, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California

**Will Hires**, Engineering and Scholarly Communication Librarian, Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge

**John M. Jackson**, Library Supervisor, University of Southern California-Los Angeles

**Alys Jordan**, Head of Research, Instruction and Outreach Services, University of Alaska-Fairbanks

**Lynda M. Kellam**, Data Services and Government Information Librarian, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

**Kate Kosturski**, Institutional Participation Coordinator, UK and Northern Europe, JSTOR/ITHAKA, New York, New York

**Charles E. Kratz Jr.**, Dean of Libraries, University of Scranton, Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library, Scranton, Pennsylvania

**Chihfeng P. Lin**, Associate Professor, Shih Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan

**Olivia M. A. Madison**, Dean of the Library, Iowa State University, Ames

**Bernard A. Margolis**, State Librarian, New York State Library, Albany

**Jason Martin**, Head of Public Services, Stetson University, DeLand, Florida

**Stephen L. Matthews**, Librarian, Foxcroft School, Middleburg, Virginia

**Jeannette Pierce**, Director, Klarchek Information Commons, Loyola University Libraries, Chicago

**Lauren Pressley**, Associate Director for Learning and Outreach, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia

**Kevin Reynolds**, Assistant University Librarian for Learning and Access Services, Jessie Ball DuPont Library, The University of the South, Seawee, Tennessee

**Larry Romans**, Head, Government Information and Media Services, Political Science and Communication Studies Bibliographer, Vanderbilt University Library

**Jennifer K. Sheehan**, Curator of Rare Books, University of North Texas Libraries, Denton

**Coral Sheldon-Hess**, Web Services Librarian, University of Alaska-Anchorage

**James K. Teliha**, Freelance Librarian, Cranston, Rhode Island

**Scott Walter**, University Librarian, DePaul University, Chicago

**Alex Phillip Watson**, Reference Librarian and Assistant Professor, University of Mississippi-Oxford

**Lizz Zitron**, Outreach Librarian, Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin