

Membership Committee
September 2015
Ellen Fockler, Interim Chair

I was asked to assume the chairmanship of the Membership Committee in late June, 2015, and accepted the position.

The Membership committee met by Zoom conference call on August 27, 2015, and discussed a number of issues and ideas. Ellen Fockler, Melanie Argo, Dana Boden, and Judy Zelenski participated. The session was recorded, and Judy provided meeting notes to all membership committee members afterward.

Main topics discussed:

- A. Joint membership applications with state library associations
- B. Sections / Interest groups and membership
- C. Institutional memberships - promotion
- D. Creation of Author Membership category
- E. Membership Brochure

Discussion:

- A. Offer the opportunity for those applying for or renewing memberships with state library associations to apply for membership in MPLA at the same time, with one check.
 - Questions included the possibility of offering a discounted price for both memberships (probably a set amount, rather than a percentage, since state membership dues vary greatly); whether the option would be offered to all state associations, with each state's option to participate; and how the logistics of sending and receiving membership information and funds would be managed.
 - Including sections or interest groups within both memberships would be difficult. MPLA membership would probably have to be a standard membership only.
 - The biggest obstacle is the variance on membership periods among state associations. MPLA has a calendar year membership; some states have a fiscal year membership; many have a rolling membership (one year from date of application). Membership renewals would also become complicated, particularly if members renewed one membership but not the other.
- B. We discussed the possible advantages of returning to sections and interest groups. Sections might give members more opportunities to be involved with MPLA and would add value to membership. Sections might meet by Zoom or hold online or email discussions. Judy added that the Membership database includes members' interests; other categories could be added at any time and would be useful for setting up sections, and might aid in conference planning as well. New technologies and library issues might create the need for new types of interest groups that did not exist when interest groups were dropped several years ago.
- C. Institutional memberships: We would particularly like to encourage state library / librarian memberships. At present only two state libraries hold institutional memberships. We would continue the practice of offering a designated staff member a personal voting membership at no additional cost. MPLA President might be a more appropriate person to contact and encourage library directors and particularly state librarians to join; the President's position is on a more equal level with these positions than a state rep or membership committee member might be.

D. We discussed the possibility of offering a membership category for Authors. The cost would be a set price (not income-based) and would carry with it a free advertisement - perhaps 1/2 page - in one newsletter per year. Judy has received an inquiry, and I also spoke with two local authors, both of whom were enthusiastic about it. We discussed an annual rate of \$50 as a possibility. This is not commonly done; MPLA might be in the forefront. It might provide authors a chance to interact with librarians, and could also provide an opening for another interest group, for authors and for those who are interested in talking with authors. We would have to decide whether it would be a voting membership or non-voting. If approved, we might consider spreading the word through SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) for authors for young people; what would be a similar medium for authors for adults?

E. We will continue to offer 1/2 price first-year memberships. Those who join after September 1st for the next calendar year will also have membership for the rest of the calendar year, potentially increasing their membership period to as much as 16 months.

We need State Reps to encourage and promote membership. Judy has a list of people who entered drawings for free memberships at state conferences but did not win. Either state reps or membership committee members might contact those people and encourage them to become members.

After our discussion, Amadee Ricketts volunteered to create a draft membership brochure. The question is whether a brochure is worth the expense of printing it, or whether it might simply be used in an online venue, sent by email to state reps to use as they wish. A copy of the draft brochure is included in this email.

Additionally, Judy could use the help of Membership committee members to design creative membership renewal pitches!