

O-2

## Vice President's Report

Thoughts from the 2003 MPLA/NLA Conference:

### Equipment

Most presenters asked for LCD projectors and T-1 lines.

Some presenters did not know how to use the equipment they requested or misunderstood what they requested/needed. It would help to verify equipment needs with each presenter immediately prior to the conference.

Using the hotel's audio-visual vendor cost more money, but provided better quality equipment and support in case of technical problems. If equipment is borrowed from an outside company the cost could be substantially less; however, it is vital to check each piece of equipment as it is delivered or received to ensure that it works and how it works.

Several libraries loaned equipment for the conference; however, a more formalized method of receiving and returning the equipment would allow more efficient use of such equipment.

In the future it would help to have several people available at the conference to handle audiovisual equipment, especially if most equipment is borrowed from outside the hotel.

Back-to-back programs caused problems for equipment setup because there was no down time for the rooms.

It would help in the future to notify presenters that they are not authorized to request equipment directly from the hotel/equipment vendor; they must request it through the conference committee, i.e., the form that they submit to the Program Chair.

### Exhibits

69 booths were sold to 62 vendors; there were 6 double booths.

Vendor signups lagged until fall and the exhibit hall was not sold out until mid-October. Many companies indicated that the economy had impacted their budgets significantly.

Diane Baker was out of the office due to family emergencies and Linda Deacy stepped in to handle Exhibits in late summer/early fall. She was instrumental in filling the exhibit hall. Sara Jones also stepped in and encouraged Gale to have a booth at the conference. Some vendors responded positively when strong customers urged them to participate!

Vendors indicated that an 8 x 8' booth is the smallest size acceptable to them. (We sold 6 x 8' booths for \$750 each.)

Charging \$750 per 6 x 8' booth was a gamble. The committee had hoped there would be competition for vendor booth space, justifying the high price. In the end we sold out, but many vendors, especially the smaller companies complained about the price being too high.

The Freeman drayage bill was \$2,960. They were very accommodating and easy to work with. They even gave us a discount for 10 booths that were unused.

## Finance

Creating the budget was difficult. There was no past year's budget to which to refer. The 2002 conference in Ely had unusually low costs and it wasn't a joint conference. The last joint conference in Nevada was in 1994. Although it also took place at the Hyatt, costs of food, etc. had changed considerably and much equipment and technology required for this year's conference didn't exist in 1994.

The final Hyatt bill was \$24,123.38. By far the largest portion of the bill was food costs (\$21,667.84), which were cost-recovery events except for the Vendors' Reception (and that was paid almost in full by the exhibitors). We were not charged for bartenders at either the Vendors' Reception or Presidents' Dinner; the bars earned the required amounts, so the service was free.

We achieved filled our required room block, so complimentary room monies were redirected towards our bill, making our total charges for rooms for the two presidents -\$132.80.

T-1 costs were \$5,000 as expected. This included setting up and troubleshooting connections and was well worth the extra cost.

Audiovisual equipment borrowed from the Hyatt's A-V Presentation Services totaled \$2388.34. They waived close to \$300 for equipment requested by a presenter (who didn't go through the proper channels).

The profit for the conference was \$61,251.18. It was split evenly between NLA and MPLA, giving \$30,625.59 to each organization.

## Hotel

Hyatt prices are very high. We received 1999 (year) room rates and that helped, but due to the cost of food it isn't a highly feasible conference site.

Holding a conference at the South Shore, i.e. Stateline would offer attendees a greater choice of hotels (and room rates!) and food.

The Hyatt is fairly isolated, so hotel rooms, meeting rooms, meals, etc. were very limited. Transportation to and from the Reno airport was also complicated. Out-of-state attendees didn't always comprehend how far away the hotel is from the airport or how treacherous the road can become, even in Fall.

If at all possible in the future, determine whether or not the conference hotel intends to remodel anywhere near the time of the conference.

There was a lack of medium-sized conference rooms, causing groups to either be packed into an undersized room or huddled together in an oversized room. Most proposed programs estimated an audience of 25-50 attendees.

#### Local Arrangements

The Tahoe Queen cruise was both popular and affordable. 237 tickets were purchased, more than the 200 required to break even financially. Weather that pleasant in November cannot be planned; we were lucky!

The Literary Evening was popular. 201 people pre-registered to attend in addition to the approximately 30 authors. Sales tax caused a headache for organizers.

The NYRA Lunch had 90 adults and 15 children registered to attend. Due to the high food costs at the Hyatt, a special childrens' menu was offered to those 12 and under. Older kids liked this pizza option, but were forced to choose a salad instead. Jackie Heid from PermaBound paid expenses for all three authors. This must have been huge: airfare, hotel and food.

165 people paid to attend the Presidents' Dinner. Again, we were not charged for bartenders.

#### Pre-conference

39 people registered for a half day of pre-conference meetings; 49 registered for a full day. REFORMA was sent a check for \$5,625 per our agreement.

#### Programs

Over 100 program proposals were received. The committee selected 66 of these for the conference. 30 were from NLA, 20 from MPLA, 10 from REFORMA and 6 were jointly presented.

There was confusion about the process of using LSTA Continuing Education money committed by Sara Jones for conference program expenses. As a result, only one program utilized this reimbursement funding.

NLA and MPLA's agreement stipulated that:

Honorariums, fees, or other expenses will not be paid to association members or librarians who "should be" members of the respective associations.

However, some members felt that it is too much that they are expected to contribute to conferences with no compensation. Academic librarians may have institutional support and can

use presentations to build their portfolios and advance their careers. Public librarians, however, cannot do the latter.

Another comment is that libraries often send the same personnel to conferences every year because these people are either presenters or serve on the conference committee. With limited budgets only those who have commitments at the conference are supported, leaving other, possibly up-and-coming staff behind. If the conference could help cover costs of some of the participants, more could possibly attend. (I don't personally feel that NLA can afford to do this because normally the conference budget doesn't have much money to spare, but this thought was expressed by others on the committee and should be taken in to consideration.)

Positive comments were received regarding the variety of interesting programs offered. Partnering with MPLA and REFORMA brought a wider pool of presenters.

### Publicity

Printing the program was problematic. The printer asked for certain specifications, i.e. formats for text and graphics, and then was unable to use their requested format. Economy Speed Press is well used and liked by local libraries but appeared to lack the technology necessary to produce a bound/stapled document using formats readily accessible to the average library.

Sharon Honig-Bear created the program layout in Publisher, including an original cover design.

Nancy Ledebor provided program descriptions, times and presenters formatted for assembly into the printed program. This was immensely helpful.

Program ads, mostly in .jpg or .tif format were received as e-mail attachments or scanned into the computer. Quality was compromised as files were converted or transferred.

Last-minute room changes by the Hyatt due to construction created significant changes to the printed program. A separate handout listing room changes was created at the last minute and distributed via the conference registration desk. A spreadsheet of revised room schedules was made into a separate poster for each day that was displayed in the foyer near the registration desk. This was effective for redirecting participants.

11 advertisements were sold for the conference program, three from local (Incline Village) businesses. Sirsi, Brodart, Grolier, Liberty Fund, Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, Follet, University of Nevada Press, Mariucca Iaconi Book Imports and BWI were among the sponsors.

The conference website was the best resource for distributing current information to interested parties. Cheryl Mathwig did a great job of keeping the site updated.

Susan Antipa also sent regular press releases to the state and regional associations for posting via newsletters, electronic mailing lists and/or websites.

NLA's newsletter deadlines didn't line up well with the conference schedule. The June newsletter went to press before programs were confirmed. The September newsletter was mailed too late to be useful for planning purposes.

Conference photos are available online at <http://www.usd.edu/mpla/conferences/2003/index.html>. Thank you to Dan Chaney and MPLA for serving as the official conference photographer and organizing/hosting the online photos page.

## Registration

505 people attended the conference. Of those 152 were only members of MPLA and 39 were only members of REFORMA. 149 were only members of NLA; however 270 people from Nevada attended the conference.

Credit card registration was very successful. Many conference attendees used online registration through MPLA.

Except for Washoe County, who allowed library media specialists to attend the conference on Friday, it was difficult to bring school library staff to the conference. The conference committee recommends allowing library media specialists to earn continuing education credits for conference attendance. We also recommend including a school library staff member on the conference committee.

Susan Graf generously purchased the conference lanyards and nametag holders through the Nevada Literacy Coalition's gift fund. She was to receive any leftovers. (The Nevada State Library purchased the paper nametags that went inside the holders.)