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From the President

JoEllen Ostendorf

Troup-Harris Regional Library System, jostendorf@thclibrary.net

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From the PRESIDENT

Gosh, just when I am getting the gist of things, my term as GLA president is almost over. If only I had known a year ago what I know now! Many thanks to the people who have helped along the way... Gordon Baker and Bob Fox for their invaluable knowledge and history of the organization; Cheryl Rogers for assisting with the COMO program and local arrangements; Lace Keaton for organizing the author track on the program and lining up authors for the Authors' Reception; and the GLA Executive Committee and the associated committees and divisions they represent for keeping GLA on target. Betty Paulk, from Valdosta State University, is the incoming GLA president and I know she can expect the same wonderful support from everyone.

By now, many of you have heard of Georgia Public Library Service's new PINNACLE (Public Library Institute for New and Creative Leadership Education) program, which is aimed at training and mentoring public library leaders of the future to step into the shoes of retiring public library directors. GLA may need to do a similar program as it is the same core group that keeps the organization running from year to year. New blood is needed, and I encourage you to get involved. I guarantee a broadening of your horizons!

GLA does a great deal to foster librarianship in the state including scholarship opportunities for people working on MLS degrees, partnering with many ALA programs, and promoting internships. GLA is the lead organization in our yearly Library Day at the Capitol where trustees and friends have the opportunity to meet with our legislators and promote the interests of our libraries. This has become increasingly important as libraries vie with other state-funded organizations for funds. Libraries must remain visible as the Legislature struggles with health care, a Fair Tax proposal, water use, property tax cuts, and other important issues. Unless we are shouting to be heard, libraries will be lost in the pack.

GLA is a great way to meet fellow colleagues. Oftentimes we rarely see our cohorts who work in different types of libraries, nor are we aware of the challenges they are facing. While we all have a common problem – insufficient funding – it affects each library differently. Some libraries have cut hours and staff while academic libraries have reduced purchasing of materials supporting the curriculum. By talking together, we often find varied ways in which we can partner to support each other. We are increasingly seeing K-16 initiatives and partnerships as well as public library/academic partnerships. We need each other to survive, and GLA is a perfect forum to allow us to interface with each other.

GLA is one of the oldest library associations in the United States. We are now in our 110th year! It was through GLA efforts that our state library, Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), was created. The association worked in conjunction with GPLS (then known as the Georgia Library Commission) to pass enabling legislation in the 1930s to allow county funding of public libraries. Another goal of GLA was the establishment of a library school. This became a reality in 1905 with the opening of the Southern (later Carnegie) Library School, which became affiliated with Emory University in 1925. Our present State Board for the Certification of Librarians was a result of the GLA Planning Committee.

In short, GLA has a long history of initiating and improving library services in the state. It's a tradition of which we should all be proud. Our goal must be to live up to the high standards set by those librarians who came before us. It has been an honor to serve as your GLA president this past year! ►►

— **JoEllen Ostendorf**
President
Georgia Library Association