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## Message from the President

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# *The Southeastern Librarian*

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

The Southeastern Library Association had a proactive Leadership Conference in Atlanta on May 13, 2005. All participants brought a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm to the meeting. The tone for the day was set by a quote from Michelangelo, “The greatest danger is not that our hopes are too high and we fail to reach them, it’s that they are too low and we do.”

Some of the guiding ground rules encouraged the membership to offer suggestions rather than criticize; keep an open mind to new opportunities; find merit in others opinions and continually ask “What can we do better?” One key was that participants were encouraged to think strategically and concentrate on the future of the organization.

Looking at the context, members examined current SELA services, membership participation levels and the overall financial climate in small group settings. Table talks included training, continuing education, technology and electronic resources, leadership and mentoring, advocacy and assessment and the future of SELA. High interest and a spirit of camaraderie permeated the day’s activities.

Many potentially positive steps came from the convocation. SELA is going to work with the state representatives and the membership to build unity with state chapters. SELA will also begin networking and outreach with southeastern library schools and students. Committees will be refocused to meet the needs of the Twenty-First Century keeping in mind our association objective, “...to promote library and information services in the southeastern region of the United States through cooperation, research and the encouragement of staff development.”

Carol S. Brinkman, SELA’s secretary, gives an overview of the meeting in her article entitled “Leadership Conference Charts Course for Future of SELA” which begins on the next page. The minutes from the meeting will be posted on the SELA web site at: <http://www.jsu.edu/depart/library/sela/>. The executive board encourages you to read and review the minutes and post your comments on our discussion list at [sela@news.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:sela@news.cc.ucf.edu).

And don’t forget to save the date. Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line and her committee have begun joint planning efforts with Tennessee Library Association. Our joint conference will be April 5 – 7, 2006 at the Hilton East Memphis, TN. Program and preconference proposals are being accepted through October 20, 2005. Applications are on the SELA website and also the TLA website at: <http://www.tnla.org/index.html>.

Let's continue our commitment to cooperation, research and staff development as we make our way back to Tennessee, the location of SELA's first conference held in 1920 at Signal Mountain.

All the best,

Judith Gibbons

## **Leadership Conference Charts Course for Future of SELA**

By Carol S. Brinkman, Director  
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The bi-annual leadership conference of the Southeastern Library Association was held in Decatur, Georgia on May 13, 2004. This conference serves as a training opportunity for incoming leadership - officers and chairs of committees, sections and roundtables - as well as any interested member, including those who might take a leadership position in the future or just want to develop their leadership skills. Additionally, the conference provides an opportunity for networking, discussion of issues important to SELA and librarians in the region, and planning for SELA's future.

For the Executive Board, the conference started early with a meeting on Thursday afternoon. The Board is composed of the association officers and the Executive Secretary; section, roundtable and committee chairs; and state representatives. Three recommendations were passed by the Board:

- Elimination of state association membership dues.
- Sponsorship, in name only, of an advocacy pre-conference at the 2005 Annual ALA Conference.
- Payment by SELA of at least part of the registration fee for Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line to attend the membership pre-conference at the 2005 Annual ALA Conference as a representative from SELA.

The Leadership Conference started bright and early on Friday May 13<sup>th</sup>, and ended late that afternoon. There were 40 SELA members in attendance with President Judith Gibbons presiding. Reports were given by the officers and the editor of the Association journal, *The Southeastern Librarian*. In the afternoon, committees, sections and roundtables met too begin their work for 2005/2006.

Following the reports, President Judith Gibbons moved the conference into the long range planning phase. Using the 2004 report of the Planning and Development Committee as a basis, participants were asked to focus their thinking on SELA today and in the future, and not get bogged down in what has been done in the past or what is traditional. Judith encouraged everyone to aim high yet keep in mind who our members are and what makes SELA different from other library organizations. Lastly, she cautioned a realistic view as to what SELA can and can not accomplish.