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## President's Column

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## President's Column

The summer and fall of 2005 have radically changed the landscape of libraries in the South. Southeastern Library Association members are encouraged to make donations to rebuild and repair the library infrastructure that we often take for granted. One of my colleagues at Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives recently returned from a tour of duty in Mississippi. He gave first hand testimony of the overwhelming devastation that engulfed major portions of the region. A way to be part of the clean-up efforts is to contribute to the American Library Association's Hurricane Katrina Library Relief Fund located at <https://secure.ga3.org/03/alakatrina>. Other options are located on the ALA web site or by linking to Mississippi State University resource list through the Southeastern Library Association web site at <http://library.msstate.edu/katrina>.

Vice-President/President-Elect Faith Line and her committee are continuing planning efforts with the Tennessee Library Association for the SELA/TLA joint conference scheduled for April 5 – 7, 2006 at the Hilton East in Memphis, TN. Spring is a gorgeous time in Memphis. From the blues to the ballet – Mud Island to the Museum of Art, Memphis will welcome SELA with a strong conference program and a wide variety of entertainment options.

In September 2005, I was privileged to represent Kentucky at the Fifth Annual National Book Festival in Washington, D.C. The Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS) estimated the crowd at between 90,000 and 100,000. I feel that I personally spoke to at least half that crowd on that busy Saturday.

The Southeastern states were located in a quadrant in a large tent that housed representatives from all states, territories, and the District of Columbia. The Kentucky group was located between Arkansas and Georgia and we had an occasional opportunity to chat about libraries, literacy, literary events and the upcoming SELA conference.

Each table had mementos including souvenir pins, maps and brochures about library services and literacy events. As individuals paraded through the "Pavilion of the States," each carried a map. Volunteer staffers stamped each passport and gave a brief welcome with a quick fact about the state. Participants were polite, curious and often made a reference to a famous event. There were numerous comments about horse racing and fried chicken. Occasionally, a confidence would be shared about a Kentucky ancestor or a visit to the Commonwealth.

In addition, the Mall was filled with a variety of tents including author pavilions devoted to Children, Teens & Children, Fiction & Fantasy, History, and Mysteries & Thrillers. Authors lectured and autographed books while fans queued up to purchase books and pick up give-aways.

The Pavilion of the States was organized by the Library of Congress, Center for the Book. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) was the major pavilion sponsor, with additional funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

Plan to visit the 6<sup>th</sup> National Book Festival on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006 on the Mall in Washington, D.C.

All the best,

Judith