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President's Column

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

An important part of getting a new SELA biennium underway is to ensure as many leadership positions are filled as possible. Without SELA members serving as chairs or chairs-elect or secretaries, etc., the numerous committees, sections, and round tables comprising SELA would not be able to function. I am truly grateful to the several dozen people I contacted and who kindly agreed to be nominated for election to office or agreed to be appointed or reappointed or confirmed in office. As of this date all committees, sections, and round tables have a chair and several have a chair-elect or co-chair as the case may be. Most SELA state representatives are in place although at least three states can be expected to elect a new state representative this year. Without these active SELA members who have volunteered to serve in these positions and without the Executive Committee, SELA really can't function as a professional association. Many of you reading this are members of one or more of these SELA units. Please consider responding when the chair of your committee, section, or round table calls for volunteers on a project or initiative. We need your active participation and, for those interested in serving in SELA leadership, this is how you get noticed and appreciated – and nominated.

Be sure to watch the SELA listserv for more information concerning the forthcoming joint conference with the Arkansas Library Association taking place September 27-29 at the Embassy Suites in Hot Springs. I hope many of you reading this will have submitted a program proposal. I'm looking forward to my first visit to Arkansas since the last time SELA and ArLA hosted a joint conference which was in Little Rock in 2010.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage people to read *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2018). This is an absolutely riveting account of the 1986 Los Angeles Public Library fire. In addition to covering the tragedy itself and the not completely conclusive investigation into who set the fire, Orlean provides a fascinating account of the library's operations and the many library employees whom she interviews decades after the fire itself. The history of the Los Angeles Public Library and some of its very colorful directors makes for great reading. As a librarian I really take heart from reading about the many amazing, hard-working, dedicated, and, yes, sometimes eccentric people who make up the staff past and present of that library. The portrait of librarians and libraries in general painted by Susan Orlean is positive and inspiring. So glad back in the Summer of 1979 that I made a then seemingly casual decision to seek a career as a librarian. Little did I know just how fulfilling this career would be. I would not be surprised if some readers of *The Library Book*, casting about what to do after college, as I was that Summer of '79, decide to become a librarian.

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