

10-1-2018

From the President

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Recommended Citation

Smith, Fred W. (2018) "From the President," *Georgia Library Quarterly*: Vol. 55 : Iss. 4 , Article 7.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol55/iss4/7>

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From the PRESIDENT

It has been quite a year! Let me review a little of what we did this year. One accomplishment was updating the voting process for our many committees and interest groups, although the implementation has been difficult. We also continued the work on the updating of the web site. Thanks, Sofia!

After impressive presentations from representatives from Macon, Jekyll Island, Augusta, and Athens, we chose Macon as the site of the Georgia Libraries Conference (GLC) in 2019 and 2020. Incidentally, in 2020 we will be joined by the Southeastern Library Association. All of the cities were worthy and my guess is in time we will return to all of them. As an old timer, I hope it will be possible some day to return to Jekyll. Years ago our biggest attendance numbers were always from conferences held at Jekyll Island.

Although the attendance numbers at the recent Columbus conference were not quite as high as the year before, they were not bad. This year's Conference Planning Committee was the first to have input from the Conference Advisory Task Force, and we used their input. The ghost story teller was fun, although it will probably be decades before a Wednesday night fun event matches the interactive play of the year before. The networking luncheon was not well attended, but those who did elect to come loved it. It is possible that the availability of so many walkable restaurants was responsible for the lack of takers on the luncheon. We got many compliments for having the ALA president as a speaker, and Betsy Wagenhauser was a lively person who represents a service vital to all types of libraries and librarians. We only ran out of toilet paper once that I know of.

During the course of the year the Executive Board identified and began work on three difficult issues. Typically the Board meets four times a year, and two of those are not well suited for long, in-depth discussions. The meeting at the conference and the meeting after GLA Midwinter both take place during other full days of activities. So the Board is having a rare December meeting to move forward on these issues.

Kara Mullen has served us well for a long time as Gordon Baker's teammate in Administrative Services. Kara is still serving but would like to be relieved of that duty. The Board was uneasy about having a single person do this work, so a task force is studying possibilities for how to continue this work without Kara. And let me add my thanks for Kara for her diligent service to GLA.

We know in principle that we would like to affiliate with the ALA Black Caucus, but we don't know the best approach administratively. Also, we are trying to align the Friends of Georgia Libraries (FOGL), GLA, and the Georgia Library Trustees, Friends and Advocates Association (GLTFAA) Division into one. Again, we think this is a good idea; we are just not sure how to do it administratively. This and the Administrative Services issue will be on the December agenda.

We have a number of sharp young officers on the Board, and Mack Freeman is one who fits that description. Among his many good ideas this year was the establishment of two new awards. One of these is to be given by the president to up to four people whom he or she

found particularly helpful to him or her during the presidential year.

When I started thinking about selecting these people, I realized that it was necessary to have a limit on the number, otherwise I would give out about 20. I first thought of Gordon Baker, but quickly realized that Gordon would win the award every year. Plus having a statue made of Gordon seemed more appropriate than a plaque, and I doubted the Board would approve the spending for the statue. Only those who have served fully understand how many times presidents turn to Gordon for answers. Gordon graciously told me he would not be offended if not selected. The four I selected were Angela Megaw, Jean Cook, Casey Long, and Elizabeth McKinney.

Angela has served for three years as registration chair. I went into the year not knowing exactly what the conference registration chair does. It seems like the answer is just about everything. Angela is perfection in a registration chair.

Jean Cook has filled a very difficult job so very ably these last years—program chair. Her attention to detail and ability to handle the complexity of scheduling are vital to conference planning.

Casey Long did a great job with the Interest Group Council. They were extremely active the whole year. Plus the digital stories she is collecting and archiving will serve generations

of Georgia librarians. But in addition, Casey served to gently prompt me when I needed prompting, and she boosted my morale during the difficult times.

And lastly, Elizabeth McKinney. Elizabeth took the time to drive to Macon to meet with Jennifer and me shortly after the 2017 GLC. She said then that she was going to be an extremely active past president. And she was. She gave advice by email, phone, and web meeting. Elizabeth came a close second to Gordon for the number of times I sent her an email more or less saying, “what the heck do I do?” And at the conference she stepped up yet again. Kelly Ansley, the awards chair, had an emergency back home and could not MC the awards ceremony. But she had sent along her slides. Elizabeth took text from the slides and made a script for me, then talked the hotel staff into printing it. Thanks to Kelly and Elizabeth, we got many compliments on the awards ceremony this year.

Being president is a ton of work, as Elizabeth had warned me. But it is also a fulfilling experience, and I am grateful Kim Boyd talked me into letting her put my name on the ballot.

Welcome Laura Burtle! And best of luck to Jennifer Lautzenheizer in the coming year.

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