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From the President

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From the PRESIDENT

This has just been a whirlwind of a year! It seems that not too long ago, many of us were January Mid-Winter Meeting. I recall setting the theme for the year, or at least my personal presidency, as “Building Better Together.” At this moment, I feel as though we have surpassed my hopes though not always in ways that I anticipated. I am so incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to serve you this year.

The major effort of the year was the transition to an administrative services management company, IMPACT Association Management. This transition was a multi-step process that began last year with an RFP taskforce. This taskforce was comprised of Eli Arnold, Ashley Dupuy, Mack Freeman, and me. The evaluation and selection process was thorough, with IMPACT Association Management having the experience and value that most closely aligned with our needs. Ashley agreed to spearhead the transition, which was a lengthy process that is nearing completion. Gordon Baker has been generous with his time to provide support during the transition.

This transition has allowed the board to provide some additional supports to our association that will allow for growth and greater value to our membership. One of the most immediate improvements will be the full implementation of membership management software. This software automates many of the processes with membership. The goal is to help the association maintain a closer connection with our members and better deliver to their specific needs. I look forward to seeing the impact of these decisions in upcoming months and years.

The Georgia Library Conference remained a priority for the year. This year’s conference committee included: Jacqueline Radebaugh (program chair), Timothy Daniels (exhibits chair), Austina Jordan (registration chair), Rosemary Humphrey (technology chair), Micki Waldrop (catering chair), Lee Olson (signage), Wendy Cornelisen (conference app), Laura Herndon (local transportation assistance), Benjamin Bryson (treasurer), Sarah Reynolds, Ben Carter, Elizabeth McKinney, Fred Smith, Lisa Smith, Gordon Baker, Laura Burtle, Kimberly Callahan, Yadira Payne, Ernie Evangelista, Stephanie Irvin, Michael Holt, Lori Gwinnett, Kelly Ansley, and Jeanne Peloquin. These folks dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort to making the conference a success. Many hands make for a light workload. More hands would always be welcome at the table.

If you were able to attend the conference this year, you heard from a couple of keynotes that spoke specifically to our efforts of “Building Better Together.” John Bracken, executive director of Digital Public Library of America, emphasized their focus on cooperative work with partners, which touches libraries of all types. Karin Slaughter, author, delighted us with humorous tales with a dark side. Jeremiah Pauley, staff sergeant—retired, shared his story of resiliency. His tools can help us all to overcome obstacles and remain flexible to meet new challenges. Jessica Walden of Rock Candy Tours entertained and enlightened us with the rich music history of Macon.

I hope that all attendees left inspired and equipped with new ideas. We tried some new initiatives that seemed to be well received.

Wendy Cornelisen's efforts to launch a conference app helped me to set an intention and stick to it. I have heard from many that this was a preferred method for conference planning. The organizational registration option allowed an organization to purchase one full-conference registration and transfer the pass to different people for each day of the conference. This was beneficial partially due to Macon's central location and ease in accessibility.

Some of the new changes were not quite so smooth sailing. The All-Conference Lunch was included in the cost of registration. We did not anticipate the number of attendees who do not personally register themselves. This created a situation where people arrived at lunch not having indicated that they would be there. Gratefully, this was remedied with the swift action of Micki Waldrop and the conference center catering. They were able to provide lunch for 327 attendees when only 220 had responded they would attend. This was a hiccup that comes with trying something new. We appreciated the patience of those who had a wait for their meal.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the yearlong efforts of Kimberly Boyd (chair), Ernie Evangelista (vice-chair) and Casey Long (secretary) for the Special Libraries Division. They started the year with a goal of better integrating GLA opportunities with other special library groups throughout the state. Like many lofty goals, there is a lot of effort in relationship-building and finding common ground. We are just beginning to see the fruit of their efforts, and I'm hopeful this will continue in future years. Ultimately, this will weave an exceptionally strong network of library professionals state-wide.

I look forward to a great year next year under Laura Burtle's leadership. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with you all this year and hope to see you all soon at Mid-Winter on January 10, 2019.

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