

Chair's Column: Join Us for Library Legislative Day and WLA Preconferences

Here's a cordial New Year's wish to all Washington Library Friends of the Library, Foundation members, Library Trustees, and other library Advocates! May your efforts on behalf of Washington Libraries continue to bear fruit in 2011!

One of the most important annual opportunities for library advocacy here in Washington is Library Legislative Day, sponsored by the Washington Library Association. This year, Library Legislative Day will be held on February 4. Details may be found on page two of this newsletter. We certainly hope that many of you will join us!

The WLFFTA board has been putting together an all-day preconference aimed at Library Board members and Friends of the Library for the annual Washington Library Association conference. There will be a full slate of programs from which to choose. Programs include:

- Orientation for new board members: covers the basics new board members need to know;
- Advocacy for all: Kitsap Regional library staff discuss how they developed programs that inform the community about the riches the library holds;
- Nuts & Bolts of lobbying for the library in the legislature: works just as well when you need to address the city council or county commissioners!
- Strategic plan that does more than sit on the shelf: why your library needs one and how it will help;
- Library Law: legal issues of which board members should be aware;
- Intellectual freedom: exploring a key pillar of public library practice;
- Primer on Roberts' rules of order: how to maneuver legally in board meetings;
- More than just book sales: other ways to raise funds for your library.

Mark your calendars: April 6, 2011, in Yakima. We hope to see you there!

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation: Current Directions for the U.S. Libraries Program

At the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we believe that every life has equal value and that each person should have the opportunity to live up to his or her potential. In the United States, the key to opportunity is education. Education is the great equalizer. It enriches our lives, informs our choices, prepares us for meaningful employment, and helps us to contribute to the communities in which we live.



Today, computers and the Internet are primary avenues for people to find information and knowledge. Nearly one-third of Americans age 14 and older—approximately 77 million people—

used a public library computer or wireless network to access the Internet last year, primarily to find resources on education, employment, or health. Americans turn to their local library for free computer and Internet access not only because it is often the highest quality connection they can find, but because libraries provide trained staff to help people use technology to improve their lives.

Over the last decade, the foundation has invested nearly \$350 million in grants and other support to install and sustain computers, improve library connectivity, and train thousands of staff in libraries in all 50 states and U.S. territories. We have also helped library leaders advocate for increased local, state, and federal support for public access technology in libraries.

Through the work of many committed partners, today, virtually all public libraries offer free computer and Internet access, and many libraries are successfully sustaining these services for their communities. But some libraries still struggle to keep pace with advancing technology and increasing demand for online access.

To help ensure all people have access to information and learning online at their local library, we will continue to partner with our nation's public libraries to help them sustain and support public access to technology. **We have pivoted our investments away from direct technology funding, to instead, focus on building the library field's capacity to plan for, manage, and advocate for public access technology.**

Specifically, the foundation's grants to support public access technology in U.S. public libraries fund:

- The development and adoption of public access technology benchmarks:

We will help coordinate the development and adoption of a set of technology guidelines—or standards—that help library leaders and staff measure the quality of their

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Join Us for 2011 Library Legislative Day

What's the difference between lobbying and advocacy? Well, it's a simple matter of the audience. Supporters of a particular cause or position are "advocates." When those people seek to influence public officials to take one position over another, they are "lobbying."

You may think that politicians never listen, but when was the last time you actually tried to talk with a politician? Let's face it; politicians can't listen to people who never talk with them.

It is absolutely critical that we engage our legislators in discussions about the value of libraries. Lobbying ensures lawmakers understand the needs of libraries and the impact laws have on them.

Libraries need *your* help. While it is uncertain which legislative issues may affect/effect libraries in the 2011, we know that your participation in **LIBRARY LEGISLATIVE DAY** in Olympia on Friday, February 4, 2011 will make a difference. Your presence will help legislators remember what you want even when you're not there.

With help from the Washington Library Association (WLA) and in partnership with the Washington Library Media Association (WLMA), you will have the opportunity to network with your colleagues from around the state, fur-

ther understand how libraries function and what issues aid and plague Washington. Armed with this information you'll be able to meet with policy makers and present a strong case in support of, or opposition to, key issues affecting each their constituents.

The Washington Library Association (WLA) has made it easy for you to participate:

- A continental breakfast will be provided to you during the welcome gathering at United Churches in Olympia on the morning of Feb. 4.
- Attendees will be briefed on critical issues facing libraries and given all the tools they need to be effective in conveying pertinent messages to Legislators during each visit.

View the day's agenda and register at <http://wla.org/legislation/legislativeday>.

Your participation on Friday, February 4 will help raise awareness about library services and ultimately enhance our ability to establish and sustain long-term relationships with key elected officials.

Questions? Contact Jennifer Wiseman, WLA Coordinator of Communications at 425.369.3221 or jlwiseman@kcls.org.

NOTE: *Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) guidelines prohibit most public employees from participating while on public time. Participation in this event needs to be on your own time.*



WLA 2011 Legislative Priorities

Washington's 62nd Legislature met for its first session of the 2011-2012 biennium on January 10. In odd-numbered years such as this the session is 105 days to provide time to write and approve the biennial budget—no easy task this time.

In preparation for the session, WLA's Legislative Planning Committee met and developed priority recommendations that were subsequently approved by the Board. Listed below, they play a major role in determining what action, if any, WLA should take on the 2,000+ bills that will be introduced over the next few months. In addition, much of the LPC's and lobbyist's time during the session will be spent reviewing and determining action level ratings on proposed legislation outside these subject areas but having a potential impact on the state's libraries.

As always, the [WLA website's Legislation section](#) will include bill tracking updates, fact sheets, and any relevant issue briefs. At the end of the session, after the Governor has acted on bills that passed both houses, there'll also be a summary of enacted legislation of interested posted there.

WLA 2011 Legislative Priorities:

- Oppose elimination of any Washington State Library programs and services as a budget reduction measure (State budget: Office of the Secretary of State);
- Oppose election of public library trustees;
- Oppose application of "harmful to minors" legislation to libraries;
- Support efforts related to funding for community and technical college library media center resources (State budget: State Board for Community and Technical Colleges);
- Support efforts targeted toward preserving school library media center funding (State budget: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction);
- Support early learning and public libraries' Early Learning Public Library Partnership priorities;
- Monitor "open government" legislation.

Mike Wirt is Director of the Spokane County Library District, and WLA Legislative Planning Committee Chair.

You can reach him at mwirt@sclcd.org.

National Library Advocacy Day

Last June, librarians from across Washington State met with legislators and their office staffs in Washington, D.C. as part of National Library Advocacy Day.

This annual event, formerly National Library Legislative Day, encourages library supporters from around the country to swarm the Capitol extolling the virtues of libraries.

Our mission was to speak to issues that benefit libraries and as a direct result, the people we serve.

Why the need to pitch libraries? Don't all legislators love libraries?

While nearly every legislator I've met claims to love and support libraries, not all make decisions that reflect these claims. Making matters worse, our struggling economy is causing legislators to make very difficult funding choices and spending cuts. The need to pitch the value of our libraries is greater than ever.

During our meetings last June, we reminded legislators that libraries are the backbone of our democracy and we serve all people equally. We are the educational, recreational and social hubs of our communities.

But more importantly, we expressed the true impact libraries make in our country today. 151 millions of people have and use their library cards regularly. 2.8 million of those use the library every month to support their small business.

Each day, 300,000 Americans get job-seeking assistance at their library. And these numbers don't even address the folks using libraries for computer access, educational programming or good old-fashioned books!

I share my experience with you in the hope you will stand up for libraries this February 4 at Washington's Library Legislative Day in Olympia. Share with your representatives how essential your library is and about the real difference you are making in people's lives. These stories are compelling but only if you make



Washington Librarians at National Library Advocacy Day in the "other" Washington

them heard!

Kristie Kirkpatrick is Director of the Whitman County Rural Library District, and is the WLA Federal Relations Co-Coordinator. Contact her at kirkpatr@colfax.com.

New Year's Resolutions for Libraries

January is a time for measurement: to determine how far the library has come and the distance it has yet to cover. In that spirit we offer the following checklist:

1. Does your library have a
 - a. Mission statement?
 - b. Strategic plan?
 - c. Technology plan?
 - d. Policy manual?
2. What method is the library using to determine how well it is meeting its goals and objectives?
3. Does the library have programming for:
 - a. Adults?
 - b. Children?
 - c. Young Adults?
 - d. Other special groups?
4. Does the library have others programs that reach out to place bound individuals: service to day care operators, service to the homebound, bookmobiles, etc.?
5. How current is the library's strategic plan?
6. Did the plan include a needs assessment or survey of current library customer needs?
7. Did the plan survey community needs?
8. Were these done within the last 3 to 5 years?
9. Does the library have policies on:
 - a. Collection development?
 - b. Personnel issues?
 - c. Circulation?
 - d. Meeting room use?
10. Does the library participate or cooperate with local literacy programs or organizations?
11. What types of computers and computer access do the library staff and customer have?
12. Is the library's Internet access adequate to meet customer and staff needs?
13. Does the library staff cooperate with any other local government or community groups?
14. Have library staff visited other libraries or talked with other library staff about library issues in the last two years?
15. Have library staff or trustees attended library continuing education events in the last two years?

Written by Karen Goettling, former Consultant at the Washington State Library. Questions? Contact Carolyn Petersen at carolyn.petersen@sos.wa.gov.

Turning THE Page



BUILDING YOUR LIBRARY COMMUNITY

In June 2007, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded PLA a \$7.7 million grant to develop and provide a national advocacy training program. The program, branded *Turning the Page: Building Your Library Community* is designed to equip librarians and library supporters with the skills, confidence, and resources they need to create community partnerships, build alliances with local and regional decision makers, and ultimately increase funding for their libraries. This training was specifically developed for library systems participating in the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Opportunity Online hardware grants program.

Through the generosity of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [Turning the Page online](#) is now available to all ALA members absolutely free of charge! [Register for Turning the Page online here.](#)

Turning the Page online is a highly interactive, free training program designed to give librarians, library staff, trustees, and supporters the skills and confidence they need to advocate successfully on behalf of their libraries.

This online training offers a rich array of learnings. Participants will have the opportunity to mix and match courses, ultimately resulting in the completion of an Advocacy Work Plan.

"Getting Started" and "What's Next" are required courses for each participant. From there, you can customize your *Turning the Page* online experience. You'll find that many of the advocacy examples and case studies throughout the program are rooted in public computing and technology; however, the skills you'll learn can be applied to a wide array of advocacy activities.

In order to receive a certificate, you must finish the two required courses, as well as four electives. Completing these will require 4-5 hours of seat time; however, you do not need to do the training in one sitting. The program will remember where you left off and direct you back when you log in again.

You may not always think of advocacy as being a key part of your job, so you may not dedicate time to planning for it, but in today's volatile environment, it's more important than ever for your library to have a voice. Be creating a start-to-finish guide—an Advocacy Workplan—you can begin to prioritize tasks as well as delegate work. Taking the time to plan at the outset will save time, energy, and stress later on. Most importantly, you'll be on your way to making a tangible difference for your library.

There are 11 courses in *Turning the Page* online:

1. **Getting Started** (Creating an Advocacy Plan for Your Library)
2. **Follow Me** (Enhancing Your Project Leadership)
3. **Your Unique Role** (How to Maximize Your Community Influence)
4. **Public Perception of Libraries** (What the Research Tells Us)
5. **Creating Your Library Story** (It's Easier Than You Think)
6. **It's All About You** (How to Make a Lasting Impression)
7. **Building Relationships** (How to Make and Keep Them)
8. **Make It Memorable** (How to Sell Your Story and Get Results)
9. **Staying on Track** (Managing and Measuring Your Advocacy Project)
10. **Show Me the Money** (Tips for Making Public Funding Requests)
11. **What's Next?** (Preparing Your Advocacy Plan for Implementation)

ADVOCATE

Published by WLFFTA and WLA

Receiving the *ADVOCATE*, a publication of the WLA Washington Library Friends, Foundations, Trustees & Advocates Interest Group, is a benefit of interest group membership.

The *ADVOCATE's* mission, like that of WLFFTA, is to advance community and statewide support for libraries, encourage library Friends, trustees and foundation associates to share ideas and enthusiasm, assist in their training, and link library supporters across Washington to address effectively issues impacting libraries.

The deadline for submissions is open. Contact the editor for specific issue deadlines. More information about WLA and WLFFTA can be found on the Internet—see <http://wiffa.wla.org>

Comments and suggestions for articles and WLFFTA activities are welcome.

Views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those held by the editor, WLA, or the WLFFTA Board.

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"Current Directions" continued from Page 1
public access technology, motivate public reinvestment in those services, and inspire continuous improvement.

- Continued research and advocacy: We will support research and the dissemination of findings, and additional investments in advocacy that can help decision makers understand the value of public libraries and public access technology in libraries. *Jill Nishi, deputy director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's U.S. Libraries Initiative, provided this summary of the current direction of the U.S. Libraries Initiative.*