

The View from HQ

*Donna Harlan
Deputy Executive Director*

Taking leave for one year from my university library to come to ACRL as deputy executive director has expanded some horizons I had only viewed dimly and many that I never dreamed existed. What does a deputy executive director do? How would I be spending my day? Who would I be working with? These are normal questions that anyone might reasonably ask about a new job.

Probably the most exciting, bewildering, and challenging time to walk into ALA is, as I did, just before the results of annual elections are announced. Elections are always exciting to people running in them and sometimes to the people who will be working with those elected. The ALA staff cycle of activity takes off by notifying the winners and outlining for them the responsibilities of their offices.

This is also the time of year when the new roster is compiled. In addition to the elected officers there are the many people appointed to ACRL committees and section committees, the ACRL representatives to ALA and divisional committees, and liaisons to outside organizations. All these appointments must be recorded with institutional affiliation, addresses, and phone numbers, so that each and every one can be reached. In the face of recording the multiplicity of activities we engage in, one gains respect for the amount of work done by our members and the dedication with which they offer their professional expertise.

Concurrently with this mountain of paperwork, rapidly approaching is an equally exciting and demanding event in the ACRL/ALA calendar. The Annual Conference with its programs and all the committee, section, chapter, and discussion group meetings requires checking the schedules carefully to make sure everyone is scheduled as planned, arranging for the speakers and physical facilities, making sure the catering is running smoothly, and so on. The telephone calls to check out last minute arrangements never seem to end. Packing the conference trunks is also occasion for high anxiety. Will we have with us the files and supplies that are needed to make everyone's work easy and accurate? What are we forgetting that we can't get along without? Fortunately there are lists from previous years to check against so that one only has



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to allow for whatever is new or unique this year.

Even after thirty years of attending ALA conferences, the shock of going to your first conference as a staff member is totally unforeseeable. For instance, when I attended as an ALA member and I had a little extra time I would drop by the exhibits to browse. By the end of conference I had usually covered the aisles and had some time to go back to particularly interesting exhibits and ask questions about new products. As ALA staff I didn't even get near the exhibits.

The ACRL staff is fully scheduled to cover as many of our own divisional meetings as possible, to act as resource persons when appropriate, and to keep up with membership interests. We collect questions, problems, and needs that we bring back to ACRL headquarters for answers and solutions. We also return with the actions taken by the ACRL Board of Directors, the committees, and the sections that require staff action to initiate.

In addition to these formal membership activities there is the daily routine of advisory services offered to the library community. The types of advisory questions range from the specific (statistics, bibliographic information, etc.) to the most general.

ACRL offers a number of publications for sale at headquarters. These are monographs which have a limited market but are of importance to academic or research librarians—our guidelines and standards, for instance. Orders for these publications are filled from the ACRL office files in response both to specific title requests and requests for general information.

Membership promotion is handled largely by our Membership Committee and by the Chapters Council composed of ACRL's state and regional chapters. Both of these groups are very active and concerned that ACRL can grow into an even stronger organization and that all potential members have the chance to share in our association's benefits. This office tries to help by designing and printing membership brochures and informational materials which are made available to the individuals and groups who wish to use them. For anyone who has read this far and wants to help spread the word, a call or a card to me will bring you any of the materials we have available.

In summary, this has proven to be a stimulating year for me, working with vital, concerned professionals with much to offer their colleagues. Who could ask for more? ■■

