

**Americas Regional Council
Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16, 2012
2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time**

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Welcome and Roll Call: Wilbur

In attendance: Stewart Bodner, Gwendolyn Ebbett, Oleg Kreymer, Oleg Kreymer, Bev Obert, Robert Shupe, Wilbur Stolt, Kate Gaylord, Suzanne Lauer, Sara Mudd

Excused: Lynn Baird, Theresa Byrd, Helen Fried, Lorraine Haricombe, Lisa O'Hara, Susan Barnes Whyte

Minutes from last meeting: Approved. Kate reminded the committee that the minutes from the last meeting were taken from the joint meeting that took place at ALA (ARC Executive and Communications Committees).

ARC Exec committee January meeting report – Wilbur

Wilbur reported on the ARC EC meeting held on February 14. A great deal of the meeting covered topics related to communications. He reported that there have been conversations at the Board level about how members can get more involved in the cooperative's communications. Trustees and OCLC's Senior Leadership Team feels that the Ambassador Program is very good and they want to see it continue. These groups are willing to allocate monies to be put to this purpose. They feel there should be more regional meetings, in addition to ALA. Members throughout ARC could benefit from additional "touches" throughout the year.

There was some discussion of a potential pilot program in California, where members would help build and strengthen collaboration and support at the local level.

There was also a brief discussion on the ARC's strategy to include more archives and museums. Oleg and Anne Van Camp (from the Smithsonian) have volunteered to participate in this initiative. Oleg reported that there hasn't been any additional activity yet, since Bill Maes (ARC Executive Committee Chair) just formed the group. Wilbur asked Oleg to relay items that come from this group as development of this group moves forward.

The Nominations Committee has completed its work and voting for the 2012 ARC Executive Committee Elections have opened. Wilbur asked that members of the Communications Committee provide encouragement to colleagues to vote. Sara Mudd reported that to date, more than 460 ballots have been cast, and reminder e-mails were being sent to voting representatives. Wilbur gave kudos to the staff who worked on this.

Good news from the Executive Committee: Bill Maes has contacted Bonnie Allen who has agreed to work with the ARC interest groups to get this reinvigorated. If you know Bonnie, please thank her for her support on this.

Kate added that as the Executive Committee speaks more about using the Ambassador Program, we'll see a lot more about this in the future. Kate thanked everyone on the Committee who volunteered to serve as Ambassadors at ALA Midwinter.

Review of ARC Activities at ALA Midwinter

Bev Obert said that in looking at the evaluations, she thinks we hit a home run. It was a good meeting overall. Keynote speaker Sarah Lacy was excellent, and the roundtable discussions were very good. Gwen concurred; lots of positive comments/feedback, and there was a good mix in terms of content.

Some comments about the length of time; roundtable discussions were very well received; people attending the meeting thought they would hear more about OCLC services, but Wilbur responded that products and services were covered as part of other OCLC meetings/gatherings at ALA. This was truly the ARC membership meeting. Bev added that perhaps this should be made clearer on future agendas.

Wilbur gave a special thank you to Kate for obtaining such a good keynote speaker. Suggestions for possible speakers at ALA Annual should be sent to Kate and Wilbur for consideration.

Kate added that overall, attendance at ALA Midwinter was down 17% this year. Many are struggling with limited travel budgets, and people are finding it more difficult to attend these meetings. The Board suggested that more regional meetings may help to alleviate this.

The clickers for in-person participants were a hit. How do we solicit more involvement and participation from virtual audience? This is a challenge for OCLC staff to consider. If people on this Committee have experience please share their experiences. Kate gave a shout out to Stuart for recommending the use of the clickers—which were a great suggestion! They seemed to energize people. OCLC is looking at ways of how to get virtual audience to participate in this as well.

Roundtable discussions: There were good discussions at the tables. Bev noted that possible comments can be pulled from evaluations to help plan future meeting topics and communications. Wilbur suggested that we leave the review of the topics discussed as part of the roundtable discussions would be a good agenda item the next ARC Communications Committee meetings.

Wilbur appreciated the survey results that Cathy De Rosa provided as part of the ARC meeting at ALA Midwinter. He noted that colleagues seemed to use e-mail more so than other means of communication (Twitter, blogs, etc.). This is helpful to know when constructing communication tools for the membership.

Ambassador opportunities at the conference: Kate observed people wearing Ambassador badges—not just at the meeting, but throughout the conference. She noted that we have been able to reach a good balance between the interest and number of people willing to be Ambassadors, and at the ARC Executive Committee meeting, there was good discussion as to how to use Ambassadors as communication tool.

Wilbur reported that Jamie LaRue has given a great deal of thought about how to use Ambassadors as a critical component of the overall communications flow. Jamie has suggested that if you are an Ambassador, you should be committed to receiving news and updates from OCLC, and distributing those messages to the membership—the Ambassadors should also help to provide any feedback they receive back to OCLC staff, OCLC Board and also within the core ARC committees. Kate added that this was a great idea. Jamie also suggested that staff take a look at what is happening throughout the year, in terms of conferences and identify a few topics to be discussed among the members. Jamie said that perhaps OCLC could set a plan that would provide key dates and topics at least six months in advance, so that people could plan and participate. Kate added that OCLC could help create a framework to make this feasible. Wilbur asked how the ARC Communications Committee could help with this process. Robert Shupe commented that the Ambassador Program is one that he has long believed in and thinks it is a great opportunity to connect with the members. Any kind of communication at the grassroots level is of paramount importance to the cooperative. If there are ways or issues where OCLC would like feedback, Wilbur asked Kate to remember that this Committee is here to help.

Wilbur asked that if there are other activities that we need to discuss during the next committee meeting, please send them to him and/or Kate.

In conclusion, the Committee felt that the meeting in Dallas was a good one. Wilbur stated that we're getting closer to the focus on communication, which is an important piece of the puzzle for OCLC and we need to keep this going!

Meeting adjourned

Next meeting: March 15, 2:00 Eastern time