

**Americas Regional Council
Communications Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 18, 2011
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time**

In attendance: Susan Barnes Whyte, Wilbur Stolt, Lorraine Haricombe, Lynn Baird, Lisa O'Hara, Oleg Kreymer, Helen Fried. OCLC: Kate Gaylord, Andy Havens, Suzanne Lauer, Sara Mudd.

Excused: Bob Shupe, Theresa Byrd, Bev Obert, Gwen Ebbett, Stewart Bodner

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Call to Order: Kate

Welcome and Roll Call: Wilbur Stolt

Minutes from last meeting: Approved

ARC Executive Committee:

Wilbur attended this meeting on August 11 and reported.

- Rich Van Orden has announced his retirement effective November 30, 2011. George Needham and Pam Bailey will assume Rich's responsibilities in the interim and perhaps in the long run.
Note from Kate: This news has not been broadly communicated yet.
- The majority of the meeting focused on goals and objectives for the coming year. Communications continues to be an important focus.
- The Global Council Communications Task Force has finished its report. The report has been submitted to the GC Executive Committee. In approximately two weeks, it will be distributed to all of Global Council. Recommendations regarding the Member-to-Member site and Ambassador Program are a part of that report. Communications will also be on the Global Council agenda for the meeting on November.
- During the ARC Executive Committee Meeting, Bill Maes (Chair) indicated that one of the primary goals of ARC in the coming year will be to improve communication. The Executive Committee discussed the need for more writing (from OCLC/members) on the value of the cooperative. Wilbur suggested that the *Cooperative eNews* will be a venue to have members cite examples how cooperation has helped them achieve their goals. Wilbur asked the Committee for input on this. Sara responded saying that she conducted an interview after the Executive Committee meeting and specifically asked the interviewee (Larry Haight, Simpson University) about his thoughts on the value of the cooperative—and will make an effort to include this question in all member interviews. Sara received some good quotes from Larry and will include them as part of the interview in the next issue of the *eNews*.
- Susan added that in the summary of evaluations from the June ARC meeting, one comment in particular regarding sustainability issues (as opposed to futures, which OCLC frequently focuses on and discusses at conferences and in other communications vehicles) really resonated with her. With the economic conditions in the U.S., could sustainability be more of a focus for communications and at the ARC meeting at ALA Midwinter? Wilbur relayed the importance of sharing amongst members; how can members aid each other to sustain our programs and services? Susan suggested having a speaker at the ARC meeting at ALA Midwinter to discuss this issue. Kate shared with the group that discussions had just begun as to issues would be relevant

and that would resonate with members for the Midwinter meeting. Lynn commented that she had been working on a unity project within the state of Idaho. One of the stories she is hearing is that school libraries are closing, public libraries are closing, and academics are cutting back. While these appear to each be a unique case, people aren't looking more broadly at how we can work together as a system to serve people. Susan responded that OCLC does that. That is another topic for a speaker at Midwinter—how we confront these issues and move forward. Wilbur really liked the concept of “unity” as a potential theme or aspect of the Midwinter meeting it ties into the value of cooperation. As we face challenging times and high unemployment rates, how we do things better together? Andy relayed that most of the people making funding decisions are listening very differently than those who work in libraries/practitioners. People who speak on behalf of libraries often benefit from getting training. It's not bad vs. good communication styles from the two groups—it's just different, so learning funders' language is important. Susan liked this topic/speaker idea. Kate referenced potential speakers from the member research project, “From Awareness to Funding.” Wilbur felt this was important topic to revisit as part of the next meeting—in an effort to assist the ARC Executive Committee with planning the ARC meeting at Midwinter.

- Another topic that was addressed at the ARC Executive Committee meeting was the realization that we are a diverse group within ARC and within the global community. As we go forward, how do we handle discussions and languages, etc. M2M site is mainly in English, while there is a Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) interest group, should Spanish and other languages be offered? There was discussion about what to do with this, what to do with M2M website—as far as moving to another platform, etc.
- Another outcome of the ARC EC discussion was that three primary goals were identified:
 - 1) continuation to improve communication and engagement
 - 2) using ARC members to help others deal with current situations
 - 3) building a strategy to increase participation from archives and museums. We, as a group, can benefit from these groups, particularly as more members are partnering together to share resources, space, provide joint educational programming, etc.

ALA ARC meeting update:

- Wilbur thanked OCLC staff for report/evaluations
- Agenda for ARC meeting included discussion of senior management and Board members. Wilbur valued this portion of the program.
- Symposium offered opportunities for members to share information with thinkers in field and among themselves
- Feedback was positive
- Kate stated that we have received positive feedback from combining the two (ARC/Symposium). We might consider having more time at the end of the symposium for discussion. From the feedback we received, members enjoyed the content, but wanted more time to reflect and discuss the topics. Susan agreed.
- Kate suggested that we discuss the theme for Midwinter more during the next ARC Communications Committee meeting and submit recommendations to the Executive Committee, as we've done in the past.
- Wilbur agreed that it should go on the agenda for the September meeting. **Action Item: Kate to add Midwinter ARC meeting to the next communications committee agenda.**

- Sara added that last year, we sent a “Save the Date” Member Update e-mail out in September and recommended that we do the same this year. Susan agreed that mid-September would be a good time to do this. **Action Item: Sara to draft Save the Date content.**
- Suzanne confirmed that ALA Midwinter will begin on Friday, January 20 (in Dallas). She added that if we follow tradition, that will be the date of the ARC meeting.

ARC ALA Annual Meeting – Evaluations summaries:

- Wilbur asked if the evaluation summaries were sent to ARC EC? Suzanne confirmed that she had.
- Wilbur asked the group if there should be a sub-committee to review and come back with analysis/observations? Susan suggested that all review them and discuss at September meeting. Lorraine and Lynn agreed with Susan. It will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.
Action Items: All members review evaluations. Kate to add discussion to the next communications committee agenda.

Recommendations from Ambassadors who worked at the booth during ALA Annual:

- Kate reported that Helen recommended that Ambassadors wear a badge and/or some kind of identifier to let visitors know that they were members (not OCLC staff). Overall comments received were positive. Lorraine was surprised how many young, librarians/students stopped by.
Action Item: OCLC staff to create ARC badges for next ALA Midwinter.
- Kate relayed a suggestion from Bev who suggested (and implemented) capturing everyone’s contact information on a lead form. The Committee discussed what to do with leads captured. Invitations to the next ARC meeting should come from Wilbur or Bill, as ARC Chair. Kate will send Wilbur the draft invitation that Sara has drafted. Lorraine supported sending such a letter and emphasized that we should not lose track of them. **Action Item: Kate to send draft invitation to Wilbur for review.** Helen agreed with this approach and also suggested that ‘talking points’ be sent to Ambassadors in advance. **Action Item: Kate to oversee talking points distributed to ARC Ambassadors.**
- Wilbur asked if these ‘leads’ were captured at IFLA and other sub-regional meetings and suggested doing follow-up on any cards received. Kate’s team will follow-up with leads/follow-up cards for these conferences and future conferences and enter into a central database.
Action Item: OCLC staff to create database of “leads” captured. DONE

Wikipedia update:

- Andy Havens noted the person working on this sent him last week errors she will take care of.
- If she has time, she will create new areas on site: Advocacy, Geek the Library program, OCLC Research, to reflect exactly what type of organization OCLC is. **Action Item: Susan will follow-up with her contact at Emporia State to see if there is someone who has more time to devote to this.**

Interest Group Committee update:

- Kate reported that Ted has resigned his role as Interest Group Committee Chair and that reorganization/refocus of interest groups should be addressed. The group agreed that strong

leadership is needed for this position. **Action Item: Wilbur will e-mail Bill expressing support for finding a replacement and to re-energize this group.**

Marketing materials subcommittee report:

- Sara reported that Oleg, Kate, Lisa and Susan met on Tuesday, August 16, to review and advise on updating the text for the following ARC materials:
 - ARC brochure
 - ARC Web pages
 - Ambassador Kit
 - Member-to-Member site
- ARC Brochure
 - The group suggested that the brochure contain fewer words (if it's possible to cut)
 - Bold important phrases throughout, such as:
 - Provides members a way to offer feedback on OCLC services and policies through OCLC's Global Council, and help shape the future direction of the cooperative
 - One members' meeting annually
 - Participate in discussions, advance ideas and influence the direction of the cooperative
- ARC Web pages
 - Same as above, where it applies.
- Ambassador Kit
 - The group discussed some concerns, such as the term "Ambassador" sounding too official, or as though it would be a fairly large time commitment. The group suggested considering renaming it something more along the lines of "support toolkit." Kate felt that the program is currently being marketed as a 'program' and people may feel this is a different commitment than just 'helping out.'
 - Wilbur felt it needs to have a label and/or some other kind of title associated with it. Do we not want to have people 'identify' themselves—from a members' point of view?
 - Oleg raised the question of whether we have a way to measure success of the Ambassador program, in order to get a better idea of how effective the "program has been". One thing discussed, was to have a survey to help determine this. Sara said a survey could be in the next issue of *Cooperative eNews*. Gwen cautioned that members might get survey fatigue if we survey them too much and asked that we consider carefully before we survey on something this small. Wilbur said that as program has developed, numbers of Ambassadors at the booth has increased but noted that it may take a couple of years to develop. Andy responded saying there are probably folks out there already doing things already—let us know what you are doing—could be part of the survey.
 - Kate asked the members of the committee if they felt like Ambassadors. Folks on the phone did perceive themselves as 'Ambassadors.' Then Kate posed the question of how we might better 'package' this 'title.'

OCLC Conference Schedule/Ambassador activity:

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- Kate requested the Committee review this schedule and let her know of planned attendance, or recommendations of others who might be attending the conferences on the list, and any interest in holding a coffee chat, small meeting, to represent the Americas Regional Council.
- Lorraine suggested looking at the follow-up/lead cards submitted from ALA Annual 2011 to broaden the pool of ambassadors. **Action Item: Committee members please review the conference list and send Kate your interest. NOTE: Several folks have already done this – THANK YOU!**

Future Meeting Times:

- A doodle poll will be distributed to determine the best time for the group to meet (same day/afternoon, just different hours will be polled). **Action Item: Sara to distribute Doodle Poll. DONE**