

RHODE ISLAND COALITION OF LIBRARY ADVOCATES

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 8, 2015, 5:30 P.M.

CRANSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, MAIN BRANCH, MEETING ROOM

Present: Gale Eaton, Emilie Benoit, Howard Boksenbaum, Tom Evans (CRIARL and State Library), Hil Herbst, Brigitte Hopkins, Valerie Karno (GSLIS), Karen Mellor (OLIS and RILA), Sarah Morenon (SLRI), Rose Ellen Reynolds, and guest Melody Drnach (LBRI).

Minutes of the June 9 meeting were accepted as read; a brief “Chair’s Report of Summer Activities” was included with the packet for members’ information.

The **Treasurers Report** showed a drop of \$165 in our accounts as of September 4, but did not reflect approximately \$330 in new memberships since then.

Membership Committee: Chair Howard Boksenbaum and member *ex officio* Gale Eaton met to discuss record-keeping and recruitment.

Advocacy: Esther Wolk of Coventry has requested COLA support for continued school library funding in the Coventry schools, as the current Rhode Island BEP (Basic Educational Plan) could be interpreted to mean that such funding is optional. The BEP affects school library service statewide, not just in Coventry. Sarah Morenon reported that RI’s school libraries face a considerable crisis. Since the current BEP took effect (ca. 2009), communities have hired fewer school librarians and assigned them to cover more schools; overscheduled librarians have few breaks from teaching to fill other roles. Declining demand for school librarians leads to a drop in qualified supply, as GSLIS students are less motivated to prepare for careers in the area. It is now difficult to hire qualified school librarians, and positions are being filled under emergency certification. It may be desirable for RIDE and URI to collaborate on a new “Grow Your Own” program to recruit qualified candidates; it could also be helpful for URI to adjust the SLM practicum schedule, making it more accessible to working students.

Gale appointed Sarah to chair a COLA ad hoc committee on school library advocacy for COLA; Rose Ellen Reynolds and Valerie Karno both volunteered. Gale suggested that Jay Litman might also be invited to join. The committee should liaise with the School Librarians of Rhode Island Advocacy Committee (of which Sarah is also a member) and advocate for stronger BEP support of library service.

Event Planning

COLA is working on a fall program with RILA and OLIS to support, educate and inspire, friends, trustees, etc. Karen suggested the topic of privacy and security in the library, which could include cybersecurity, intellectual freedom, and patron expectations. The issue is timely—Governor Raimondo signed the RI Identity Theft Protection Act of 2015 into law in

June—and it builds on an October 20 Privacy Workshop for Librarians, by the Library Freedom Project. The co-sponsored session for Trustees and Friends should be scheduled before Thanksgiving, and should help library stakeholders understand why they need to care about issues such as database security, surveillance, confidentiality, and the legal responsibilities of trustees to ensure free access to all points of view. The Board voted to cosponsor this program with OLIS and RILA.

Gale suggested that COLA might also want to consider a spring program in collaboration with SLRI and others. Joan Ress Reeves has mentioned the Harry Potter Alliance as an effective advocacy group, and it might make an appealing platform for a spring advocacy program aimed at PTAs and principals.

The COLA Annual Meeting will be held on April 12, rather than in February. We have booked the State House. Hil's recommendation, Tony Estrella, Director of the Gamm Theatre, has agreed to be our speaker.

Updates from Organizational Reps

Cheryl Banick (SLA) and Nicky Pallotti (ARIHSL) submitted brief reports *in absentia*, which were included in the agenda.

CRIARL: Tom Evans reported that Raquel Ortiz is the new CRIARL president and Susan Warthman vice president; Tom continues as secretary and Carol Terry as treasurer. They are revamping bylaws, and the Steamship Historical Society may be applying for membership.

Howard asked how the role of CRIARL may change now that the HELIN Consortium is losing key members. (Bryant, Brown, and URI have dropped out of the consortium because the cost of maintaining III* as the platform for their integrated library system had become too great; cheaper options are now available.) Tom said they expect increased use of the CRIARL membership card, which allows faculty and staff of member institutions to borrow from other member libraries. The schools that have left HELIN are still part of the LORI network (with more than 200 libraries), so their borrowers still have access to resources through librarian-mediated Interlibrary Loan.

GSLIS: Valerie reported on the School's \$475,000 IMLS grant, a new faculty search, accreditation, and enrollments. The grant, "Media Smart Libraries," brought 24 participating librarians together for their first meeting on Thursday night, and Mary Moen has been hired to manage the project. The search is for a continuing lecturer, with possible conversion to tenure track faculty at a later date. The accreditation process is receiving assistance from former ALA president Maureen Sullivan; URI has requested an extension

* III, often pronounced "Triple I," stands for the company originally known as "Innovative Interfaces, Inc.," which is "dedicated to providing leading technology solutions and services that empower libraries and enrich their users worldwide."

until 2018 visit. Enrollments are up, with 60 new students—a 40-50% increase from last fall.

RILA: Karen Mellor reported since Brigitte missed some of the meeting. RILA is waiting for the Executive Board to confirm a new vice president. They have a tentative date for the next RILA Conference of May 25 and 26 at Crowne Plaza in Warwick

OLIS: Karen reported that NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges), which accredits our institutions of higher education, is working on new standards—and like the BEP that has weakened support for K-12 libraries, the proposed new standards undercut support for college and university libraries. NELA and RILA are working on a response. Gale asked if COLA should co-sign a letter moving for stronger NEASC library standards; for the time being, that seemed to be our best option.

Karen mentioned that there are new representatives on the RI Library Board, appointed and supported by the Governor: Annie Feldman representing small libraries, John Bucci representing medium and large libraries, Melody Drnach as a general reader, and Doug Norris representing a statewide library advocacy group. Two positions remain unfilled.

The fall schedule for OLIS Continuing Education has been released. Also available on a first-come, first-served basis are licenses for digital literacy training, under which a public library becomes an approved site for proctoring Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment. Proctor training will occur in early October. Libraries joining on their own will pay \$200 per year—an affordable price for a much-needed service.

New business – Rose Ellen will send our condolences to the family of Stanley Abrams, who served for 6 years as a COLA board member and 2 as treasurer.

Meeting adjourned 6:57.

Respectfully submitted,

Brigitte Hopkins and Gale Eaton