

*RHODE ISLAND COALITION OF LIBRARY ADVOCATES
BOARD MEETING*

*Tuesday, January 3, 2017, 5:30 P.M.
NEW ENGLAND INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, 1 NEW ENGLAND TECH BLVD, EAST GREENWICH*

Minutes

The COLA Board met on a very wet January 3, 2017, in NEIT's elegant Hall of Fame room. Present were Lisa Ashe, Emilie Benoit, Howard Boksenbaum (Chair), Gale Eaton (Secretary), Neeltje Henneman (Treasurer), Cheryl McCarthy (Vice-chair), Ida McGhee (CORI), Karen Mellor (OLIS), Sarah Morenon (SLRI), Prina Pressburger, Patricia Raskin, and Tom Viall.

Report from the Chair:

- Howard suggested that we might increase active COLA membership by 1) establishing a joint membership with Cornucopia of Rhode Island (CORI), similar to the joint membership option recently advertised by the Rhode Island and New England Library Associations (RILA and NELA); and 2) asking RILA in future years to have sign-up options for COLA and CORI on their membership forms. Cheryl M. moved that Howard should contact the RILA membership chair to explore this possibility, and when Howard protested that making it a formal motion would force him to act, Ida quickly seconded. The motion passed.
- Howard drew our attention to the *District Dispatch*, news from ALA's Washington Office (WO), which is available at www.ala.org/offices/wo. (It is also the source of the "ALA Advocacy, Issues, and Legislation" links from the front page of www.colari.org.) Emily Sheketoff, head of the office, has agreed to be the keynote speaker at our annual meeting in April, so we look forward to her views on our more and more interesting times.
- After last month's meeting, the COLA Executive Committee met to discuss priorities for the rest of this year and next. The committee emphasized:
 - Impact: support the full 25 percent funding and restoration of the AskRI budget; make a buzz about libraries.
 - Means: work closely with RILA and OLIS to achieve goals; develop the Speakers Bureau to create buzz; use the clear goals and buzz to expand membership.
 - Resources: identify and muster what we'll need to move forward.

This report spurred lively discussion. Karen and Tom V. advised us that this will be a difficult year to push for the 25 percent, as the General Assembly's interest in repealing the car tax will deprive municipalities of a major funding source for education and libraries. We have lost some of our most effective supporters in the Assembly, and RILA wants to work on building new support by establishing a library caucus. Contacting local legislators could be a natural role for COLA, and our main push should be to support RILA and OLIS in advocating restoration of AskRI funding.

Patricia was scheduled to speak Friday (January 6) at a small business conference at Bryant College, and asked for talking points; Howard gave her a copy of our COLA response to the Governor's Workforce Board

draft plan. She urged available board members to attend the event and speak about the role of libraries in supporting job training – much as Ida effectively advocated school libraries at the ESSA forum described last month.

Gale had solicited advice from journalist Brian Jones on getting out stories discussed at our last meeting (the importance of health services librarians and the “25 things you never knew you could find at your library”). Sarah urged that any such articles focus not on library jobs lost but on valuable services to the public. As for buzz about COLA itself, most of us heard of it by word of mouth.

Secretary’s Report: Minutes of the December 6, 2016 meeting were amended and accepted.

Treasurer’s Report: Our accounts currently stand at \$8,148.24.

Nominating Committee: Gale, Neeltje, and Emilie have begun brainstorming and plan to come up with a preliminary slate (including alternates) to start calling by January 24; board members are urged to e-mail suggestions and recommendations.

Membership Committee: Gale plans to send out individual renewal letters and solicit organizational memberships through library directors, trustee chairs, and friends groups. The next newsletter should be ready by early February, inviting all to the Annual Meeting and enclosing applications for the Reeves Awards.

Updates from Organizational Reps: There were no reports from CORI, CRIARL (Consortium of RI Academic and Research Libraries), or SLA (Special Libraries Association). Cheryl Banick’s e-mailed report for ARIHSL (Association of RI Health Sciences Libraries) reached us after the meeting, but centered on news of layoffs at CharterCARE which Howard had already forwarded to all of us; the Board discussed how COLA should respond to library closings and librarian layoffs by non-profit health organizations such as CharterCare and Care New England.

SLRI (School Librarians of RI): Sarah reported that SLRI will be hosting an AASL (American Association of School Librarians) training session for ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) advocacy on January 12. Meanwhile, charter schools, enabled by the education commissioner’s privileging of local priorities, are dropping their libraries.

Old Business: Karen proposed that the joint OLIS/RILA/COLA program be held on April 4; the COLA Board agreed. Howard and Gale agreed to meet after the Board adjourned to review Annual Meeting preparations.

New business: Pnina agreed to help post news to COLA’s Facebook account, which has languished since Brigitte Hopkins stepped down from the Board.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Eaton, Secretary