



## **Annual Report 2006 ARLIS/NA President**

Ann Whiteside  
President, ARLIS/NA  
[awhites@mit.edu](mailto:awhites@mit.edu)  
phone: 617-258-5594  
fax: 617-253-9331

### Summary of the Society's Year

As I write this report, I am struck by how much ARLIS/NA has accomplished in the last year! We took on many ambitious initiatives this year, most of them generated from the comments that you, our members, gave to the Board about how our Society functions. There are two themes that we have seen throughout the Society this last year - communication and technology. The Board has spent many hours and most of our Board meetings looking at various aspects of communication and technology in an effort to find solutions to technological challenges and to address communication issues. The initiatives that ARLIS/NA has begun this year reflect those themes as well.

A major issue for ARLIS/NA this last year was the Affiliation Agreement process (Strategic Plan, Goal IV). I am very pleased that every one of our chapters signed off on the agreement. This says much about the value of both our Society and our Chapters to each of you, and I thank each and every chapter officer who helped us work through the process together. I know this was not easy for many in our organization, and I truly appreciate the various discussions held in Banff, over e-mail, through our Chapters listserv, and the one-on-one e-mail conversations that I held with many of you. I know that there are many members who are still feeling frustrated by the process, primarily that there was not enough communication around the process. The Board has heard these comments and is taking them very seriously. Though the process was challenging, I think the result is that we have opened up new avenues of communication and collaboration between ARLIS/NA and our chapters. I also think that the process allowed us as a Society to see new opportunities for ARLIS/NA, and has provided us with new ways to think about communication in general.

We have had several Task Forces that have worked over the course of this year, all of which will be helping to move different areas of ARLIS/NA forward. One is the Assessment Task Force, chaired by Lynda White (Strategic Plan, Goal IV, Objective A). The process is something that I felt would help ARLIS/NA analyze itself as a Society and perhaps provide us with

ways to re-think how we do business. The Task Force, whose members include Sarah Falls, Kathleen List, Mark Pompelia, and Rebecca Price in addition to Lynda, has done an outstanding job of gathering input from our members through surveys and discussion groups. They wrote an impressive report, filled with thoughts from all of you about how our Society's structure can best make the Society function. There will be further discussion at our Atlanta conference in various venues, and at our Annual Membership Meeting on April 30<sup>th</sup>. Once the Task Force members compile all our thoughts, the Board will develop a timeline for implementation of those recommendations deemed important by all the members of ARLIS/NA.

The Member Services Task Force, chaired by Margaret Webster, looked at several options for database management systems for ARLIS/NA (Strategic Plan, Goal IV, Objective B). The Task Force recommended that ARLIS/NA subscribe to MemberClicks because it will provide us with an online membership database. The product is a multi-faceted solution to address the needs of ARLIS/NA now and in the future. MemberClicks software includes a members only section, web site templates suitable for chapters, and an online calendar. It supports online membership registration and renewal via web forms, as well as the online payment of dues. At this writing, Craig Flemming at HQ is working with Margaret Webster to migrate the membership database to MemberClicks. A major issue for ARLIS/NA is the desire from members for us to provide different methods of communication amongst members. Blogs and wikis are two forms that the Board has been asked to implement. The challenge for us is the need to balance what we can afford and the level of technology we currently have at our disposal. Both of those will require further analysis in the next year. The report of the Task Force will discuss some of these issues, and will be given to the Board for consideration at its pre-conference Board Meeting in Atlanta.

We ventured into the world of online publishing this year with the move of the Art Documentation book reviews to the ARLIS/NA website (Strategic Plan Goal I). This new online publication is called *ARLIS/NA Reviews Online*. The goals for this were to increase visibility of our reviews, and to make their publication more timely and current for our members. I highly commend the Publications Committee for their hard work to make this transition. We have not completed the transition to this form of online publishing; we do not yet have a searchable database behind the reviews site, for instance. This is one of the technological issues that our Society is dealing with. How does a non-profit organization, staffed by volunteers, with a small budget develop the resources that allow us to have the technological resources that many of us have in our home institutions?

Last summer, there was a lively and thought provoking discussion on both ARLIS-L and VRA-L that led to the formation of a joint ARLIS/NA – VRA Task Force on Collaboration. This group, led by Ed Teague and Elaine Paul, is analyzing the overlap of interests as well as areas of uniqueness focusing on the organizational structures of the two associations. The Task Force has

been very visible, on ARLIS-L, on our web site, and at both the VRA conference and the upcoming ARLIS/NA conference. They will gather the information they have received and recommend collaborative possibilities in their report, which is due in June.

Another effort related to technology and how we can use technology to further our educational goals can be seen in the Education Task Force, chaired by Carole Ann Fabian (Strategic Plan, Goal I). The Task Force has been working during the last few months, and will report to the Board at the pre-conference Board meeting in Atlanta.

The SEI Long Term Planning Task Force has been working for the last several months defining the near term future of SEI (Strategic Plan, Goal I). Their recommendations will be presented to the Board for the pre-conference Board meeting in Atlanta.

As part of ongoing efforts in communication throughout ARLIS/NA, the Publications Committee and the Membership Committee have been looking at new ways to provide services to our members (Strategic Plan, Goal II). The Publications Committee is analyzing the benefits of Art Documentation becoming a peer reviewed journal. The survey that we were asked to participate in was an effort to get further feedback from us. This too was spurred by a discussion on ARLIS-L. The Publications Committee took the opportunity to investigate the concept of peer review for Art Documentation, and to hear your direct input.

The Membership Committee was charged by the Board to look at different types of membership dues models for ARLIS/NA (Strategic Plan Goal IV, Objective B). The finances of ARLIS/NA, while stable, are still not where they need to be in order to be considered a healthy organization. Before jumping to raise dues, the Board agreed that we should analyze the service needs and desires of our members and to see if there are dues models that can support the services we want to provide that might be different than simply raising dues. The Membership Committee studied several organizations, did research on dues models, and developed two different models that may serve our needs. They too wanted to hear what members might have to say about different types of models, which is why they also conducted a survey asking for your input.

The Board has been working with the ARLIS/NA Liaisons to other organizations to help define how best to be liaisons (Strategic Plan, Goal III). Several of our liaisons have fairly regularly updated ARLIS/NA members on news from other organizations, and have shared ARLIS/NA news with other organizations. As mentioned in the Assessment Task Force, there is much to consider about the functions of liaisons and what those relationships can bring to our Society.

The Society Circle continues to be vibrant and active, with contributions that reach just over \$10,000 for this year. This is less than last year, but deeply appreciated. This giving program is one of several ways in which ARLIS/NA does fundraising in its tiered giving program (Strategic Plan, Goal IV).

Led by the Publications Committee, ARLIS/NA signed a co-publishing agreement with Scarecrow Press. The first joint title in the series, *Art Museum Libraries and Librarianship*, edited by Joan Benedetti, will be honored at our conference this year.

The joint ARLIS/NA and VRA Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management held its third institute at Reed College in Portland, Oregon from June 11 - 16, 2006 (Strategic Plan, Goal II). The institute was once again highly successful and continues to play a major role in the education of those who manage image collections. The 2007 SEI will be held at Indiana University, June 24 – 29. Registration filled up within just a few weeks of opening, indicating that this program is important to our profession.

Our annual conference is the primary venue in which come together to learn, to share our knowledge, and to meet in person (Strategic Plan, Goal I). This year's conference will offer a range of workshops that show the diversity of our membership – there are workshops that cover how to write a resume to how to approach retirement. Our sessions include new, hot topics that we are facing this day, as well as sessions on architecture and collections in the Southern US. We continue to focus on mentoring those new to the profession; we have a half-day workshop to start people off in our year-long mentoring program, as well as our conference mentoring program. We continue also to focus on our roles in instruction, through workshops and sessions; and we continue to address the needs of many types of art libraries and image collections through our conference offerings.

The Board and conference planning committees are still focused on finding the best time in the spring in which to hold our conferences, and to find the balance between conferences that are too long and too short. Both of these issues are related to the finances of ARLIS/NA, as well as to our members' individual finances.

As we have begun working with Debbie Apfeld, our new conference manager, Margaret Webster also took on the task of updating the ARLIS/NA Conference Planning Manual. The current conference planning team, the Banff Conference Planning group, as well as various members of the Board helped to bring this document up to date, and useful in new ways. We all thank Margaret for doing this!

The Professional Development Committee and the Executive Board have been asked to endorse the Core Competencies for Visual Resources Professionals, the results of the IMLS grant received by Hemalata Iyer and

Jeanne Keefe in 2004. This document is a complement to the *ARLIS/NA Core Competencies for Art Information Professionals* published last year and is being looked at by the Professional Development Committee.

As we have had changes in ARLIS/NA, there have also been changes in our management firm, McPherson Clarke. McPherson Clarke lost several employees this last year that were key to ARLIS/NA's services. There are new people in place, whom you have been introduced to through Elizabeth Clarke. Craig Fleming is our Association Manager. Debbie Apfeld is our conference manager. And Sue Singer, while not a new employee to McPherson Clarke, oversees our finances in tandem with our Treasurer. McPherson Clarke also lost the services Derek Crosley, who had been working as the ARLIS/NA web master. As is always inevitable, these changes created some difficulties in services as we worked through the transition. Elizabeth, the Board, and I have all been in very close communication and are aware of the service gaps that have occurred and are working to close those gaps so that services to all of you run more smoothly. And, as is often the case, the changes that have occurred have given us the opportunity to re-think how we deliver better and more efficient services to ARLIS/NA members. The Board is working with McPherson Clarke to define our service provision more clearly (Strategic Plan, Goal IV).

#### Activities of the President

- Meetings Attended:
  - ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, Banff Pre-Conference Board Meeting as Vice-President
  - Post-Conference Board Meeting as President
  - Conference Planning Advisory Committee Meeting in Banff
  - Conference Planning Advisory Committee meeting Atlanta
  - ARLIS/NA Mid-Year Board Meeting, Minneapolis
  - ARLIS/NE Chapter Meeting, October 2006
- Will attend
  - ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, Atlanta (Pre-Conference Board Meeting as President
  - Post-Conference Board Meeting as Past President
- Participated in the revisions of the ARLIS/NA Handbook and List of Members for 2006
- Examined, approved, and signed contracts with McPherson Clarke, and for the Denver conference hotel
- Prepared the Society annual report
- Examined and signed a contract with Indiana University for the 2007 Summer Educational Institute
- Served as Board Liaison to the Nominating Committee, and the Distinguished Service Award Committee
- Worked with the Development Committee on conference fundraising
- Served as a member of the Finance Committee

- Discussed projects and issues with the Membership Committee, Publications Committee, Distinguished Service Award Committee, and other groups and individual members in the Society
- Kept in touch with Elizabeth Clarke, Margaret Webster (Past-President), and Deborah Ultan Boudewyns (Incoming President) on a regular basis
- Answered email queries from members in a timely fashion or forwarded them to the appropriate resource
- Sent out near-monthly messages to ARLIS-L about Society activity. These messages were also posted to the News portion of the ARLIS/NA web site
- As Vice-President/President Elect briefly attended all Division and Section meetings at the Houston conference to introduce the incoming Vice-President/President Elect.
- Chaired the Banff Conference Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) in June.
- As Vice-President/President Elect briefly attended all Division and Section meetings at the Houston conference to introduce the incoming Vice-President/President Elect.
- Wrote the President's "Welcome to Banff" for the conference web site and a similar welcome for the conference program.
- Prepared a Welcome Party greeting, New Members Orientation agenda, Convocation remarks.
- Participated in the Leadership Breakfast meeting
- With the Atlanta Conference Planning group, planned the Society Circle reception
- Prepared executive board agendas for the Banff post-conference Board meeting, the Minneapolis mid-year board meeting, and the Atlanta pre-conference Board meetings
- Served on the Executive Committee of the Executive Board
- Monitored completion of Board action items