

SLA Executive Board Meeting
January 12, 2005; 12 noon
181 University Ave., 2nd Floor

Attended: Laura Knapp, Martha Foote, Daniel Lee, Joy Shanfield
Guest: Ulla de Stricker
Regrets: Gayle Kiss

1 -- Agenda

Regarding additions to the agenda, Laura added an update on the Presidential (Pam Rollo) visit to the agenda under President's Report, Daniel added feedback on Courier newsletter editors to Director's Report, and Helle itemized the three items to go under Treasurer's Report.

2 – Minutes

Gayle pointed out that section 6D, Dec. 3 minutes, should read that Lynn Howarth cataloguing event is actually the one being coordinated by Gillian and Philip rather than a separate or second event. Other Board members pointed out the need for changes in these sections: in 3A, change "They" (second sentence) to LISC representatives; in 4A, the conference site launch date is January 17th, and the comments about a logo should be moved to a new section, 4B, because they pertain to the Chapter and not to the conference site. Daniel had a comment about one of his action items. Joy replied that the action item lists are compiled for the convenience of Board members, and not later made public in the posted (web site) version of minutes.

Helle moved that the minutes from December 3, 2004 be approved as corrected. Seconded by Daniel. Approved.

3 – Succession planning (Guest Ulla de Stricker)

Laura welcomed Ulla, who asked about the Board's latitude to make large-scale changes to the way the business of the Chapter is conducted. Laura replied that the Board is empowered by the members who elect it, and is free to decide how to accomplish objectives.

The following points were discussed and agreed upon:

A -- The 3-year commitment presently required of the President-Elect may in fact be an obstacle to filling the position. (Remedy: release President to Expertise Pool upon completion of year as President, reducing the commitment from three to two years of highly defined responsibilities)

B -- Volunteers could benefit from guidance of experienced mentors who have previously held significant Board or volunteer positions. There are numerous such persons, and they could be asked to contribute. People who make themselves available for mentoring can be viewed as being within an Expertise Pool (EP). (Remedy: create an Expertise Pool)

C – The Past-President, who is likely feeling fatigued after two years of the three-year commitment, could be released from the responsibilities now assigned the Past-President, and move immediately to the Expertise Pool. (Remedy: include former Presidents in Expertise Pool; eliminate a Past-President position with defined responsibilities)

D – The President-Elect is now burdened with the demanding job of overseeing programming, and this may deter from the general learning experience in preparation for leadership as President. (Remedy: give President-Elect no formal duties, or light duties that are not

excessively demanding, e.g., Membership. Also responsible for recruiting volunteers for year as President.)

E – There has not been much leadership among the volunteers serving on the Programming Committee. (Remedy: the Board should include the new position of Programming Coordinator, which because of its importance should be filled by someone from the Expertise Pool. To get the programming role done effectively, events should be formally divided up among people in the Current Volunteer Pool (CVP) who have both volunteered to serve for the year, and expressed an interest in Programming. They should be given specific dates and topics to work with.)

F – Attendance at programs may be affected by the fact that the roster of events is made public on the listserv and web site looking approximately six months ahead. (Remedy: the roster of events programming should be laid out in advance for the entire year, and publicized for all to see. Topics are selected from ideas expressed by the membership or, in the absence of enough of these, garnered elsewhere by the Programming Coordinator. In order to achieve a full year of published programme ideas, it may be necessary to start by planning for more than one year out.

G – It is recommended that the Chapter leadership aim to be more assertive and proactive, and to generate ideas that might shake up the somewhat complacent and passive membership.

H – There is much to be admired about the programming being provided by the CLA-CASLIS (or CASLIS) organization, such as offering a price advantage to members who sign up to attend 80% of the meetings for the year, and using a single venue and caterer service for all the programs. In order to improve programming and increase attendance, it is recommended that co-programming with CASLIS be considered. It would be advantageous to both organizations to lessen the competition for programming attendance and volunteer talent. It is acknowledged that the orientation of the parent organizations, CLA and SLA, is somewhat different, but this does not seem to affect the commonality of professional development programming for special librarians. (Remedy: Chapter President talks to CASLIS President and proposes that more joint programming be planned under a “gentleman’s agreement” kind of arrangement.)

Ulla drew up a list of functions that are essential for the Chapter to provide: programs, website, newsletter, accounting, career support, and these were discussed. Board members provided additional functions for potential addition to this list: mentoring, alliances/liasons, membership outreach, archives, connectivity with SLA organization, and communication. The following points were made about some of these functions:

Mentoring –

- this has been difficult to get going in the past.

Alliances / liaisons, including connection with SLA Washington –

- more attention should be paid to Chapter alliances with other geographical areas, with the educational institutions, with other associations, with the parent (international) organization, and with vendors. Currently only the President and Past-President maintain ongoing connectivity each year with SLA Washington.

Archives –

- Ulla asked why the Board thought this was important, and it was agreed that it might be only for the purpose of keeping tabs on formerly active people, a kind of inventory of knowledge (knowledge management).

Communication –

- the web site should be more interactive, and more Chapter news should be pushed forward (e.g., status reports on major initiatives underway). A column like the one written by

Stephen Abram that amusingly comments on local news of the day made relevant for librarians could also be done. Presently, only the President talks to the membership regularly, through issues of Courier. Board members commented that a barrier to doing this is the outmoded technology platform (asp and html pages) that underlies the current web site. It is unfortunate that headquarters content management technology has not been made available to divisions and chapters. Ulla advised that a consultant be hired to assess the web site technology.

- the Courier (newsletter) could be viewed as the members' voice, become more like a blog, with ideas retained as a Chapter resource.

- in Ulla's opinion, the listserv is the best thing that ever happened to the Chapter, although calls for help have become its most prominent usage by members.

- is it necessary to have the position of Secretary to record what happens at meetings?

Perhaps other Board members could rotate doing it, although it is difficult to participate in the meeting while taking notes. Ulla suggested that Chapter might pay a student or new graduate to do this.

Membership (Internal Relations) –

- it might be sufficient to have Board members take turns at meetings looking after new members. This raises the question of whether there is sufficient time allocated before the speaker at current Board members for membership outreach and networking.

Executive Board --

The optimum number of people on the Chapter Board would be between 7 to 10, and required are these positions:

- 1) President
- 2) President-Elect
- 3) Treasurer
- 4) Programming Coordinator
- 5) Web site
- 6) Alliances/Liaisons

Newsletter –

Board members were of the opinion that a Newsletter function/position should not be included on Board. Rather, it could be a satellite of another position, such as President or President-Elect. It could also be grouped with other promotional functions, such as survey.

Registrar –

Retain this very important position that was brought back in 2003-4. Position to be recruited by Programming Coordinator. Helle commented that this position should not be shared among too many persons, as continuity is important and it is a difficult job to do well.

In addition to the Board, the following groups would be constituted:

A) Expertise Pool –

Approach former Chapter leaders, as identified through Archives, and ask them to lend their expertise / agree to be called upon to mentor new volunteers.

B) Current Volunteers Pool –

Manner of recruiting for this group needs to be worked out; e.g., they could be selected by the Board, and given general or specified areas of responsibility. If left unspecified, at the very least, upon recruitment, members of the pool would have specified their areas of interest for the record.

Gayle sent her comments on Ulla's written proposal with the following thought: when Chapter had Advisory Board meetings, they were too large, attendance fell off, the meetings were discontinued, and the Advisory Board continued to exist in name only. Board activities were streamlined down to the current Executive Board (size, 6 persons), and this certainly contributed to the current difficulties with succession. If Ulla's proposals are implemented, the Advisory Board will no longer exist.

When Ulla receives the minutes of this meeting, she will prepare a document to be reviewed at the next meeting (February 2nd). If the Board passes the proposals, they would then move to the steps of publicizing the changes to the membership, and incorporating the changes in to the Best Practices document.

4 – President's Report

A – LISC proposal

The representatives from LISC changed wording of the proposal, as indicated with use of both bold and italic fonts. The changes are largely a matter of semantics, and serve to clarify the fact that they want to be on a par with other planning subcommittee groups.

Daniel moved that the revised LISC proposal be accepted. Seconded by Martha, and approved.

The new arrangement will begin in April 2005. Because LISC has additional programs planned to take them to the end of their current year, ending June, 2005, they have asked for \$200.00 to cover the cost of any of these that do not break even. After some discussion, Helle moved that the Chapter give LISC \$200.00 to help them run their remaining programmes up to and including June 2005. Seconded by Daniel. Approved.

B – Membership

Yasmin Chandra, who has been helping Pam Casey with Membership, is considering not renewing her SLA membership, which is due before the end of the 2004-5 year. It is possible that she would no longer be able to serve on Membership without actually being an SLA member. Laura suggested that the Best Practices document be reviewed to confirm whether there is a requirement of volunteers to be members.

Pam Casey is embarking on an intensive membership drive to contact and try to get back any former members who have not renewed after 2004. Pam asked again if membership could have a more prominent place on the web site.

C – Past President's Report (Laura, for Gayle who is in New York City)

1 – Nominations

Karen Melville nominated for Professional award as non-member (special achievement or significant contribution, field library science). SARC awards are not due until March.

2 – Programming

Sonia Solomon accepted position as Programming Chair. Hot House Cafe was booked for the Rollo visit evening event in April, because Sigfried's is closed during that week. There is nothing new to report on the Lynn Howarth programme, the Technology Night, or the I.P. event.

3 -- Student sponsorships

Helen Katz has no problem with the proposed new way to handle donating student sponsorships for meetings. Helle clarified that there is less than \$100.00 remaining from her previous donations, and this can be worked down over the balance of this year. Registration form should

provide a spot to indicate if one is paying for more than just oneself, and the Registrar should pay attention to the amounts paid in order to clarify receipts for the Treasurer.

4 – FIS Student liaisons

Marjan asked if they could work on a feature for the Conference, 'Toronto on the Cheap' and have conference web site link to it, but apparently such a contribution is already on the main conference web site, written by Barbara Slawek. She also asked if the listserv could be used to match incoming students with billeting families (free accommodations in Toronto), as it does not appear as though conference organizers provide such a service. This will be considered.

D -- President-Elect's visit

(actually discussed under Other Business at the end of the meeting)

Dean Cantwell Smith will be away during Pam Rollo's visit, but the Vice-Dean, Joan Cherry, could be available to meet with Pam at 10:30 am on the Friday of her visit (April). Whether the Board meets with her for dinner after the Thursday evening programme, or for lunch on Friday will depend on her travel arrangements.

E – Board coverage at Programming Events

Laura went over forthcoming events, starting with January 13th, to ensure that one of the Board members will be in attendance at each. Jan. 13 – Laura and Helle. Student event after that. February 2 -- Daniel, Laura or Joy. OLA – Daniel.

5 – Director's Report

A – Housing the Survey Monkey software

Members continue to use Survey Monkey on Erika Steffer's account. Survey just sent out was received more than once (at different email addresses) by some of the Board members (not sure why this is so).

It would be awkward to close the Steffer account. Our past surveys and current Restaurant Reviews (for conference) are in the account, and it is not easy to transfer surveys among accounts. It would be less than ideal to have our survey results merged in with those from other Chapters on the SLA HQ account. We can reimburse Erika for past usage and take over this account for the Toronto Chapter. Usage is only free if questions asked are fewer than 10, and persons surveyed are fewer than 100. Laura will find out what we owe for months past, and what current carrying charges are.

B – Newsletter (Courier) Committee

Stephanie Blundell and Jo-Ann McQuillan told Daniel that they do not wish to continue on as Newsletter editors for a third year, next year. Daniel will start thinking about possible replacements. The two of them will still be responsible for a July 2005 issue of Courier, which should ideally be used for conference write-ups (valuable to have for future). Ulla suggested that the membership be asked, through the listserv, well in advance, to submit conference write-ups for sessions they attend.

January 25th is the deadline for the next issue.

6 – Treasurer's Report

Helle reported that Scott Smiley, her contact at HQ, has left SLA before statements for the year were finalized. He did send the copy of Quicken that she requested, but she has been unable to install it at work or at home. This reinforces the need for an IT consultant for the Chapter. Meanwhile, she can consult the COP for Treasurers (forum).

Helle also discussed difficulties she is having with reporting from the Registrar. She received receipts from three successive events in one block just before Christmas, and has been unable to add up / reconcile the facts and figures contained in them. Some details appear as:

- Nov. 10th, \$110 incoming, expenses not received yet
- Nov. 23rd, \$325 incoming, expenses \$267
- Dec. 2nd, \$2,690 incoming, Micromedia covers \$1,000, expenses \$4,046.

The December loss should be shared with the other participating organization, CLA-CASLIS. An 80 (SLA) / 20 (CASLIS) percent attendance figure will be used.

7 – Other business

(Pam Rollo's visit, recorded under President's Report, no. 4(D)).

There was some discussion of the requirement that volunteers for the Chapter be members in good standing of the SLA organization and the SLA Toronto Chapter.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.

Next meeting: February 2, 2005.