

Sue Stroyan and Maureen Sullivan

Meet the candidates

Vote in the election this spring

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates (both are ACRL members) for ALA President, and *C&RL News* is pleased to publish their responses. Each candidate was given 1,200 words in which she could respond to five questions and contribute an optional opening statement; the responses are identified under each question.

Opening statement from Maureen Sullivan

This is a time of great opportunity and challenge for libraries, librarians, and library staff. While those who fund and govern libraries often ask questions about the value of what we do and how we contribute to our communities, those who use our services and come to our programs know our value and contributions.

ALA is the best resource and most effective voice for libraries on a national level. The 2011–15 Strategic Plan provides an excellent framework for ensuring a vibrant future for the profession. As president, I will continue to engage ALA governance and the membership broadly to accomplish the goals and objectives in this plan. I will collaborate with the elected leaders of all ALA units to identify current activities in support of the five goal areas: advocacy, building the profession, transforming libraries, member engagement, and organizational excellence. I also will work with these elected leaders and ALA members generally to identify innovative and sustainable future strategies in each of these areas.

I believe I will bring the experience, commitment, and enthusiasm necessary to



Sue Stroyan



Maureen Sullivan

improve ALA and the profession, and to support your ability to continue to make a difference in the lives of those whom you serve. I urge you to vote in this election and to support my candidacy for president.

1. What do you see as the top three most important issues facing our profession today? What do you see that ALA can do to address them?

Stroyan: Ensuring freedom of, and access to, information—this is an issue that continues to be increasingly challenging as attempts are made to control the networked environment. ALA's Office of Intellectual Freedom plays a critical role in answering challenges to this basic freedom along with the various ALA and ACRL committees monitoring for possible violations of these issues for the membership. A good example of this was the recent blocking

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of the WikiLeaks site and the ensuing assertive challenges by librarians before the ALA Midwinter Meeting and the resolution coming out of Council.

For my second and third issues I found myself in a dilemma between two compelling issues that are somewhat related.

How can we ensure that our own professional educational system keeps abreast of societal, technological, and political/legislative change? And how can we develop strong leaders for our professional association at all levels? ALA must have strong ties with colleges of library and information science education—ties that go beyond the accreditation process.

One way to do so would be to hold another educational summit tie attracting young graduates with new ideas to it. In addition, ALA can raise the bar on the professional development it offers to members—increasing the amount of programming, and the sophistication of the subjects treated. ALA has the Emerging Leaders program, which addresses early leadership development, but nothing for middle management or for senior leaders. As libraries are challenged by the economy and with technological changes, leadership throughout their institutions is even more critical than ever before. Librarians are asked to be advocates, trainers, community leaders, gamers—jobs outside the skill set taught in library school. The association should help its members gain new skills and should look for ways to enhance leadership capacity in the profession. Let's build on the strong example that ACRL offers in terms of leadership development and extend it throughout the membership.

Sullivan: I believe the three most important issues are:

- Competition from publishers and other vendors of information access who believe they can bypass libraries and sell information products directly to the publics we serve.

- Challenges to, and erosion of, our principles and values.

- The difficulty those we serve have in achieving information and media literacy as the complex world of information explodes in a socially networked environment.

ALA must continue to be aware of the issues and challenges its members face. ALA must focus its attention and resources in those areas and create opportunities to engage the talents and energy of its diverse membership. ALA also must make measurable progress in each of these areas. Specifically:

- Work with library schools and ALA/division education programs to prepare libraries and all who work in them for the transition to what John Palfrey has defined to be the “era of digital-plus” and remain vital and relevant. We must continue to serve our publics with free and open access to information as much as possible.

- Preservation and education on the importance of our principles and values, especially intellectual freedom, privacy, and access to information. ALA must increase its efforts to defend and foster these principles and values globally.

- Make the case for the value of libraries and the role of librarians in education and community development to ensure that we continue to make a positive difference in the lives of everyone. Our work to develop research skills and metaliteracy (Thomas P. Mackey and Trudi E. Jacobson make a compelling case for reframing information literacy as a metaliteracy in the January 2011 issue of *College and Research Libraries*) is critical to ensure the continuance of our democratic principles.

2. Please share what leadership skills you would bring to ALA to lead and move the association forward given those issues.

Stroyan: It's a cliché, but I strongly believe people can lead from any position they hold. I have been a leader in all the institutions I have been associated with throughout my 35-year professional career—even as a student worker I was

looked to for direction by others. My communication style is collaborative and inclusive: I have the ability to listen and to help synthesize thoughts into coherent opinions. I like to gather the facts and hear points of view from all stakeholders, using that input to make decisions and set policy. I am diplomatic, thoughtful, and considerate of diverse opinions, and I am also strong and not easily intimidated when the situation calls for action.

Sullivan: Much of my career in librarianship has been devoted to the improvement of libraries through such large-scale organization development programs as strategic planning, restructuring and work redesign and leadership development, both within individual libraries and for state and national library associations. This experience has helped me develop my skills in strategic thinking; facilitating the creative thinking and innovative planning of groups of diverse individuals; engaging others in developing a shared vision and ensuring their commitment to achieve the vision; approaching challenges and problems from a whole-system perspective; developing trust; acting with integrity; and guiding others to discover their talents and capabilities and to use them effectively in the face of complex change.

3. Libraries are being challenged in this difficult economic environment to demonstrate their value to the communities they serve. In response, ACRL is actively pursuing a research and action agenda that demonstrates and advocates for the value of academic libraries. What role can you as ALA president play in this and other related initiatives?

Stroyan: I commend ACRL for taking the bold step in creating “Value of Academic Libraries” to demonstrate the value of libraries value into the academy. Libraries are respected on their campuses, but this severe economic downturn with accompanying budget cuts has created an “new

normal” that includes assessment of every program and department. As data from libraries participating in this ACRL initiative comes in, I would like to convene a meeting to share findings and forge an action agenda. As participants I shared/discovered what hard decisions were made about what programs/projects had to stop and what new things need to be done to the steps that they took to ensure the vitality of the library to the campus enterprise, we could explore how to generalize the methodology used to other types of libraries.

Continuing work in the arena of advances in scholarly communication is also critical to the value of academic libraries. Open access has long been a theme librarians have advocated. I think that we must continue to explore the best avenues to use to make real progress in the academy and the market place, for instance, by forming strategic alliances and sharing best practices more widely.

Sullivan: ACRL’s work in this area is critically important to the future of academic libraries. The recent report, “The Value of Academic Libraries: A Comprehensive Research Review and Report” by Megan Oakleaf is an excellent resource for use throughout higher education. I especially value the inclusion of sections that describe the work that has been done to demonstrate the value of school, public, and special libraries. This alone provides an excellent foundation for work across types of libraries.

As ALA president, I will support ACRL’s pursuit of its research and action agenda in this area. I also will work with ACRL and other ALA divisions and units to develop ALA-wide initiatives to provide evidence of the value that libraries and librarians bring to their respective constituents. Many of the more than 20 activities listed as next steps in the report’s Executive Summary are very relevant to the school, public, and special library contexts. I believe our ability to make an effective case for the value of the many ways in which we

make a difference for our constituents is absolutely essential to a vital and relevant future. ACRL's commitment and fine work in this area represents a major contribution.

4. As ALA president, you will be asked to address the media on a variety of issues and public policies related to libraries and to advance the association's legislative agenda. Provide an example of an active role you have played in advocating for or against a proposed local, state, or federal policy that impacts libraries.

Stroyan: Throughout my career I have participated in opportunities to advocate for library issues both at the state and national level with media and legislators. As a public librarian and as the assistant executive director of a system, I annually attended state advocacy days hosted by the Illinois Library Association, leading my local delegation in our discussion with our representative. I am on a first name basis with my state representative and feel comfortable approaching him on all library issues today. I was a delegate to the state and national White House Conference in 1992. I've also attended a number of ALA National Library Advocacy Days, being the spokesperson in our delegation to our representatives.

During my tenure as the director of the Digital Citizen Project (a research project at Illinois State University that investigated illegal downloading of media by students and proposed behavioral and technological remedies), it was my responsibility to help develop the testimony for the principal investigator of the project when she testified before Congress.

I participated in many trips to Washington D.C., to talk with staffs of congressmen and senators, and staffs in the Departments of Education, Commerce, and Justice concerning our findings and possible legislation on this hot topic.

I'm comfortable and prepared to speak for ALA and its units.

Sullivan: My experience with advocacy for libraries has been primarily in work with college and university presidents and provosts related to issues on their campuses. I welcome every opportunity to represent the interests of academic and research libraries and libraries generally to the broad range of stakeholders who may question our value. I know how important libraries are to an informed citizenry, to the formal and informal education of children, teens, and adults and to free and open access to information.

I have not yet had the experience of advocating for or against a proposed local, state, or federal policy, but I am confident that I will be able to represent and advocate for libraries. I also believe I will be effective in advancing the association's legislative agenda.

5. What experience have you had advancing diversity in the library profession? As ALA president, how will you move forward ongoing association efforts regarding the recruitment and retention of librarians from underrepresented groups?

Stroyan: In each of my leadership roles where I had the authority for hiring, I have included minority recruitment avenues for all positions. Currently, I'm mentoring international students and encouraging them to consider the library profession. In my 19 years at Illinois Wesleyan, I've helped to influence more than 15 students to attend graduate library school. I have also spoken about the virtues of our profession at career days and professional development days that included diverse audiences.

New programs such as Emerging Leaders and Spectrum Scholars are infusing our association with people of color and identifying energetic creative people to help shape the direction of our organization through their innovative efforts. I support these initiatives and will work to see them flourish and strengthen their programmatic efforts into deeper, more integral elements

of the organization. There are dozens of academic library residency programs and nationally recognized programs. These programs play a very important role in bringing underrepresented groups into our profession.

During the ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego, I met with many affiliates groups, to discuss this and other issues. As ALA president, I pledge to these groups I will highlight the Joint Conference of Librarians of Color throughout my vice-presidential year and will speak at this conference in September 2012.

Please visit www.suestroyan.com for more information on my initiatives and views.

Sullivan: My experience includes being directly responsible for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity programs in the hiring of librarians and staff in the libraries at the University of Maryland

and Yale University. I also served as the chair of ALA's Minority Fellowship Advisory Board and as an advisor to ALA's Office for Library Outreach Services in the 1980s.

Many of the management skills and leadership development programs that I have designed and present include work on how to create a culture of inclusion and active appreciation of individual differences. In my facilitation of groups and teams, I ensure that each person participates, that everyone acts with respect and appreciation for others, and that the differences in ideas, work styles, opinions, and perspectives are surfaced and addressed in constructive ways that will advance the work of the group or team.

I ask each group with which I work to reach agreement that they will "expect, respect, and work with their differences."

Please visit maureensullivan.org to learn more about my positions. *~*

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