

Joseph Janes, James LaRue, J. P. Porcaro, and Julie Todaro

Meet the candidates

Vote in the election this spring



Joseph Janes



James LaRue



J. P. Porcaro



Julie Todaro

The ACRL Board of Directors posed the following questions to the candidates (Porcaro and Todaro 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 he or she could respond to six questions and contribute an optional opening statement; the responses are identified under each question.

1. What do you see as the most important issues facing our profession, particularly for academic and research librarians? With respect to these issues, what should ALA do to address them? What skills do you bring to ALA to help address these issues and move the association forward?

Janes: More and more of what we think of as high-quality “traditional” media is in fewer and greedier hands, and that closing fist impinges on our ability to do what we

want to do on behalf of our clientele every day. Simultaneously, the opportunities for the use of freer and more open tools—the opening hand of open source and open access publication, institutional repositories, even blogging and video creation—provides researchers, and libraries, with new ways of reaching more and broader audiences. (At the same time, I’d note, those will foster and enable new modes of communication, beyond the strictures of what we now think of as the “scholarly article” or “conference paper,” which means as new generations of scholars grow up with those tools, they will create new artifacts, think of new ways of answering their research questions, and, ultimately, ask questions they might never have before. That probably implies new areas, methods, and outcomes of inquiry, which is an exciting prospect.)

As a profession, we are all deciding how to balance these, how many eggs to put in

which basket, as I say. ALA, ACRL, and all of us need to work as hard as we can toward facilitating and fostering the free and open creation of and access to knowledge and information for the greater good.

I'd add here as well the critical roles of information literacy, institutional assessment, and additional areas addressed more fully in other questions below. I can tell these and other stories in a compelling way to the wider world, making the case that libraries of all kinds are critical infrastructure in all our myriad settings, and can also help all of us to think through how best we might move forward toward our preferred futures.

LaRue: I would focus on three issues. First is the costs and conditions of collection development. For libraries, the move to digital publishing has been financially ruinous and utterly unsustainable. Second is advocacy: there is a crisis of public mindshare for investment in education and academic libraries. Third is the recruitment of diverse, skilled, and passionate staff.

As ALA president I would address these issues by:

Continuing to push for greater librarian presence in building and managing our own e-publishing infrastructure (building on the Open Access movement). I have done this as part of my work with the Douglas County Libraries Model—which has now been adopted by hundreds of libraries, and made a real difference in the marketplace.

Launching an initiative to take “embedded reference” up a notch, and have librarians demonstrate leadership in the larger academic community. I have applied, written about, and spoken about this process nationally and internationally.

Finally, I would combine those two efforts to reach out to potential librarians eager to make a difference in the world.

Porcaro: Our number one issue is funding. What we know from the data is that when people vote on a levy, bill, or other “thing” that supports library funding, they are voting based on their perception of the librarian. Not on how great the building is,

or how wonderful and far reaching the collection is, but on how they feel about their experiences with a librarian. If we want to stay funded, we need to recognize that we'll do this by cultivating our librarians and library staff. I would address this directly through my presidential initiative, which will be a large-scale public relations campaign that reminds the public how wonderful their librarians are.

My two concurrent issues to that are:

- that we, as a field, are still doing an extremely poor job of recruiting people to the field who look like the American public. That's commonly referred to as “diversity,” and I would like ALA to not just have another task force or committee on the topic, but really try to listen to marginalized groups and give them the larger voice that we all need and they deserve.

And

- my children are growing up without a school librarian. This affects all of us, including academic, public, and special librarians. Without a school librarian, not only do the rest of us shoulder the burden of teaching those skills that are learned at that level, but we also are lacking the basic “emotion building” that happens in the school library. What happens when this generation hits the ballot box, and they grew up thinking that they didn't need a school librarian? That's a dire reality that we need to address immediately.

Todaro: If we study the variety of ALA lists of issues (division, roundtables, committees, etc.) there are great similarities as well as differences. While one would think this lends itself to easier paths to finding answers to problems or dealing with issues, this really isn't the case due to differences in constituents, the variety of organizations, the size of institutions, and vast differences in resources and services—much less the variety of types of librarians who bring vast amounts of expertise and diverse focus to the profession. Singling out one primary issue for me, however, is easy. “Value” is paramount to me—not only as a workplace

professional but also as an association focus. Articulating value and using it to drive decision-making, accountability, and—ultimately—funding, means more than the value of the library in general or within specific environments. Instead my primary focus is the value of the librarian in student learning, engagement, and success, and in the higher education environment overall as well as in communities and the wide variety of other umbrella institutions in which libraries exist.

ALA needs to focus on librarians and their critical role and value in the educational process. This focus should be realized by *specific content* on the value of *librarians* in the educational process (P-16) overall, including the classroom, the community, and in lifelong learning.

I bring decades of experience in the classroom in all levels of instruction, over 30 years of experience in academic libraries and as an educator, and experience as a public librarian and as a certified school librarian. In addition, I have both variety and depth of knowledge and experience of association leadership.

2. ACRL's Plan for Excellence identifies goals that heighten the impact that librarians have upon the Value of Academic Libraries, Student Learning, and the Research and Scholarly Environment. In what ways would you, as ALA president, work with ACRL and its partners to advance or promote these goals?

Janes: Those goals reflect, in many ways, the current environment in higher education in general around accountability, student success and its assessment, and the (slowly) emerging changes in scholarly communication. I would also note, however, that libraries and librarians of all kinds are facing questions on their viability, value, performance, and roles in new methods and modes of information creation and sharing, so in a sense we're all in this together.

Specifically to the ACRL goals, many

of those rest on making good use of the important threads of research which have emerged both from the academic library community (from University of Rochester and other institutions, for example) and from sources such as the Pew Center, OCLC, and Project Information Literacy. This growing body of knowledge about the environment and clientele will be of great help moving forward on those goals.

One of the things I believe I can uniquely bring to the presidency is my experience, as an educator and writer, in leading people through formulating answers to difficult questions and challenges, taking account of research as well as practice. I would hope part of the legacy I could leave behind is to encourage our professional community to take a more active role in creating the future we want; the leadership of academic librarians toward a more open scholarly communication infrastructure, despite large forces aligned against it, is a great example of that. (Convincing a few oblivious eminent faculty who serve as editors of journals with pernicious IP policies and usurious subscription costs to open their eyes and raise a stink wouldn't hurt either.)

LaRue: As ALA president, my initiative (from embedded librarian to community leader) directly addresses ACRL's first goal (demonstrate alignment with and impact on institutional outcomes). To promote this movement, I would encourage the development of a series of national and international intellectual leadership efforts (writing, lectures, training workshops). I presented on this topic in Bulgaria last year.

The focus on advocacy, and tying the investment in libraries to institutional progress, helps raise the funds for ACRL's second goal (transform student learning, pedagogy, and instructional practices through creative and innovative collaborations).

The third goal (accelerate the transition to a more open system of scholarship) is precisely the point of my first initiative (developing the rationale for building and maintaining our own e-publishing infrastructure).

Porcaro: I would listen to those who are doing the wonderful work that gave us those goals and plans. I don't want to be elected because I have all the answers, I want to be elected because I understand that there are people out there who *do* have answers and need to be listened to. The work that is coming out of ACRL is top-notch and stands on its own. As an ACRL-member/ALA president, I would allow it to shine.

Todaro: With "value" as a primary issue for me, I would begin the ALA discussion of value of the librarian on ACRL's premier research on value. This study's initial bibliographic essay has extensive and excellent content on value in all types of libraries and coupling this outstanding content with LLAMA's competencies study, the ethnic caucuses and ALA's international groups' knowledge of and commitment to multicultural and global skills of professionals as well as input from experts in age-level, special needs, and functional competencies begins the process.

3. How do you define diversity, and what experience have you had advancing diversity in the library profession?

Janes: When I think of all the talent that has been wasted over the centuries in stupid and pointless discrimination and hate and fear, it's infuriating and maddening. So I guess I have a very simple notion of diversity: we're all better off if everybody gets the same chance to play. I've experienced and benefited from that in a very personal way; when I came out a few years ago, my friends and colleagues, particularly in the library profession and in my school, were nothing but supportive, for which I will be forever grateful.

I'm also proud of the efforts we've made to recruit and graduate students from all sorts of backgrounds in our MLIS program, which I chair. We use current students to help in recruiting and mentorship; we eliminated the GRE requirement, which helped ease the application process for many people; we use a holistic review process that

takes applicants' background and interest into account; and these and other methods have paid dividends. This year almost 1 in 4 of our MLIS students are from traditionally underrepresented groups, and we're among the top schools in Spectrum scholarship recipients over the last two years. Still much to do, but this is all very encouraging and rewarding indeed.

LaRue: To my mind, diversity is nothing more than a refusal to limit the search for talent. Anyone might turn out to be a fantastic librarian. More people should be. My practices have been: scout for the spark, all the time. Say to anyone who demonstrates competence, "Have you thought about librarianship? You have the intelligence, the passion to serve, the drive to make things better." Back it up with educational stipends for employees. Next is the adoption and promulgation of interview processes designed to reveal the skills and attitudes that actually matter. These techniques (see "assessment center") have been shown by the EEOC to be far more effective in promoting diversity, as demonstrated by the make-up of every staff I have ever managed.

Porcaro: Diversity is allowing voices that aren't dominate to speak up and be heard. That is something that I believe in—listening. My experience is coming from a multi-racial (immediate) family, it is part of my identity. I see the cracks not as an "ally," but as someone who's family members are directly affected by these issues. The best way to fix them is to stand out of the way of the voices that really need to be heard while at the same time amplifying those voices.

Todaro: I define diversity in the broadest sense and strive to serve and hire individuals who mirror constituents. As a community college librarian, my everyday workplace experience includes great diversity of race, ethnicity, and color. In addition, three additional major roles and responsibilities as well as interests of mine include service to the homeless and foster children (both professional and personal work),

services to the visual and hearing impaired, and sustainable and “green” libraries.

4. Membership organizations, such as ALA and ACRL, need to demonstrate their value to recruit and retain members. What does ALA need to do to keep the organization relevant to academic and research librarians, particularly those new to the profession? How can ALA continue to engage members and non-members as travel and professional development funds are being reduced or eliminated?

Janes: All membership organizations are facing these questions, and ALA is no exception. There have been some positive steps—webinars, remote participation in meetings and conferences, other professional development opportunities, including online learning tools—which are encouraging. ALA needs to continually demonstrate value for investment, and the other factor that research has shown to help determine professional association membership and participation is identification with the professional identity, so we need to continue to mentor and encourage our newer members to think of themselves as fully part of the larger professional community, work that we can all help out with.

LaRue: The short answer is to celebrate the members themselves. ALA and ACRL have to engage their members as soon as possible, and that engagement is about identifying and encouraging the investigation of individual interests. The early identification of promising experiments, and their exploration through various web-based communities and communication, is the obvious response to the decline of travel and CE funds. We need to draw our new professionals into the dialogue, and give them the opportunity to shine. The notion of viewing personnel management systems (and ALA programs) as leadership development will go a long way to retain a committed membership.

Porcaro: I would like to think I am

running on “listening to those new voices” moreso than anyone else. INALJ (inalj.com) is a great example of how ALA (and the LIS program establishment) has failed on the “listening” end: INALJ within a few years completely dominated the library field as the leader in helping new librarians to make the transition from LIS degree to work in our field. I’m glad to have their endorsement for president, and hope to be able to shift the ALA, in any way I can, from an organization that is “not one of us” to the newly minted LIS folks to an organization that can help in a transitional way.

Todaro: ALA and ACRL have excellent diverse and extensive resources and services for librarians such as ALA and ACRL conferences, diverse locations for both theoretical and practical workshops, in-depth learning opportunities, excellent research to guide decision making, and staff experts in consulting and assisting their members. I would expand state, regional, and local groups as well as Chapter content—guides for repurposing conference content for delivery “at home,” more focus on speakers’ bureaus with a focus on speaker expertise by geographic locations, and guides for repurposing conference and learning content for individual organization staff and professional development “days.”

5. Managing research data (acquiring, storing, organizing and analyzing it) is a subject of great interest both in and beyond higher education. ACRL is currently exploring how it might provide educational opportunities related to research data management to its members. As data management becomes more widely used in analytical methods in academic and scholarly research, as well as government and industry, how can ALA support divisional efforts to make sure we are helping our members to thrive in this new research environment?

Janes: This is critically important. The move towards the use of massive and

growing data sets is profoundly changing the ways in which scholarship, in almost all areas, is done; indeed, it may well be becoming a new paradigm for research. This presents two opportunities for academic and research libraries and librarians: one, participating in this evolution by partnering and embedding with scholars doing this kind of work, and secondly, facilitating the curation, preservation, and metadata aspects of these large data sets for their continued value and use.

Both of those are familiar yet new, and as such are great examples of how we have always blended tradition and innovation to move forward in the service of our missions on behalf of our clients and communities. They are also, incidentally, chances for us to be ahead of the curve, in preparing and positioning librarians to be these kinds of partners and lead in these areas. It also feels like an opportunity for ALA to articulate clearly that the research data realm is one that our profession should, and must, be engaged in, to further support the work of individual libraries and librarians to jump in and be at the table as this takes shape.

LaRue: As the question suggests, the lessons of “big data” (and the management of thousands of smaller data sets) apply to more than libraries. As ALA president, I would continue to urge our institutions and leaders to look outward, to form early partnerships with promising projects. This might include offering internships or fellowships to rising stars in other fields—researchers in residence, perhaps. It should encompass having an ALA presence at conferences and workshops that are not library-centered. Or it might be offering our own skills to institutions who haven’t yet considered metadata and public access.

Porcaro: I don’t think it’s smart for me—or any ALA president—to answer questions they don’t know the answers to. I am not a leader in the field of managing research data. This is, again, where listening is a more important thing than speaking. I can’t speak to “managing research data,”

but I promise that during my presidency, I would not diminish the importance of it, to those it is important to. Anything I can do to amplify the messages that need it, I am there for, and I trust those who are saying what needs to be said and are doing what needs to be done in that field.

Todaro: Although ACRL and ALA should continue to focus on content for, and education of, data, digital, and metadata librarians as well as general technical services librarians, we need to reach out to nonlibrarian organizations (IT, higher education, undergraduate and graduate content education) to train and educate our departments (IT, research departments, disciplines) on what we need, what we do, and what we know. This assists our infrastructures in determining how they will meet our needs and establish networks of cohorts. The practice of school librarians bringing their principals and superintendents, as well as public city and county librarians bringing their officials, can expand to librarians bringing their IT representatives, their research offices, etc. and working together in learning. In addition, recognition of individual successful partnerships through both awards and best practices brings awareness.

6. There has been much written about net neutrality and the dangers that changing existing policies might mean for websites, organizations and other information agencies and content providers. In what ways will the end of net neutrality affect college and research libraries, and what steps might we take to protect our interests?

Janes: I’m quite optimistic about net neutrality, particularly given events over the last few months. The ALA Washington Office has been on this since the beginning, and the support from the White House and most recently the FCC is very encouraging. It’s not a done deal, and there’s still work to be done (and by the way I think the ALA WO is one of the strongest aspects of the association), and the consequences of non-

large-corporate interests being perpetually in the slow lane are too dire to contemplate.

LaRue: College and research libraries (and not just them!) are already being taken to the cleaners by a few distributors and publishers. Adding additional data speed and access charges will only reduce the availability of scholarly communication and student learning by reducing resources (faster lanes will require more money), or increasing the time and convenience of slow lanes. Again, the choice comes down to a passive acceptance of a vendor-centric business model, or the eager promotion of a librarian-managed infrastructure that better reflects our professional values, and saves money. Librarians have begun to build such systems (the DPLA project is one example). As ALA president, I would use the bully pulpit to highlight librarians as essential players at the heart of the digital publishing revolution, not victims at the fringe. To put it another way: build and run our own networks (with skilled IT librarians who live our principles), and continue our aggressive lobbying to articulate and defend our values to legislators.

Porcaro: Net neutrality is a very easy thing to take a stance on: of course no one wants a regulated “unneutral” Internet. An ALA president, though, needs a wider lens than that, because the Internet isn’t just a series of tubes that we can switch neutrality on or off. What I worry about in the obvious “we all need net neutrality now” stance

is that there was a ton of money dumped into it from Internet giants like Google and Netflix. I think that the ALA is supposed to be a critical eye in terms of who we support on political issues, and I’m a little concerned that we are in lock-step on this issue with companies who have such scary stands on other issues we care about, like privacy. As president, I promise that I will stay a critical listener to as many sides of an issue as I can.

Todaro: The end of net neutrality will greatly affect college and university libraries and higher education in general, *but* differently funding institutions will not only create have and have not environments and constituents, but will also limit many organizations’ abilities for joining networks and consortium (at higher levels of cost/speed, etc.) and thus inhibit classroom faculty and scholarly communication and research, as well as student opportunities for accessing content and creating their own content.

ALA and ACRL need to create the broadest as well as the most specific content on affect and outcomes of the lack of equity that the end of net neutrality will bring. Content delivered directly to higher education infrastructures and umbrella organizations should be included in awareness campaigns, including direct content to presidents, other higher education administrators, legislators (with experience in supporting high education at local, state, and national levels and business offices as well as classroom faculty. *ZZ*

ACRL presidential candidates’ online forum

The 2015 candidates for ACRL vice-president/president-elect will participate in an online forum on Tuesday, March 17 from 2:00–3:00 p.m. CST (3:00–4:00 p.m. EST, 1:00–2:00 p.m. MST, 12:00–1 p.m. PST).

Come hear Scott Walter and Irene M. H. Herold discuss their platforms and vision for ACRL. Walter is the university librarian at DePaul University, and Herold is the uni-

versity librarian at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa.

Details for accessing the webcast will be available on the ACRL Insider blog, www.acrl.ala.org/acrlinsider, by early March. Audio archives of the candidates answering prepared questions will also be available on ACRL Insider a few days after the forum.

ACRL members running for ALA Council in the spring 2015 election

The following ACRL members are either nominated or petition candidates for ALA councilor. ACRL members are encouraged to vote for these candidates to increase ACRL's voice in ALA affairs.

Doug Archer, Peace Studies, Global Affairs and Political Science Librarian, Hershugh Libraries, University of Notre Dame

Sandra Barstow, Head of Collection Development, University of Wyoming Libraries, Laramie

Jennifer Wann Boettcher, Business Bibliographer, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

Steve Brantley, Head of Reference Services, Eastern Illinois University-Charleston

Elizabeth Jean Brumfield, Distance Services Librarian, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas

Trevor Dawes, Associate University Librarian, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri

Millie Gonzalez, Emerging Technologies and Digital Services Librarian, Framingham State University, Framingham, Massachusetts

Clem Guthro, Director of Libraries, Colby College, Waterville, Maine

Michael Gutierrez, Associate Librarian, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

Mary Kathleen Hanselmann, Chief Librarian, Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California

Megan Hodge, Teaching and Learning Librarian, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Amy Hoseth, Associate Professor/Coordinator for Onsite Services, Colorado State University Libraries, Fort Collins

Linda Ann Kopecky, Head, Research and Instructional Support Department, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries

Rodney Lippard, Director, Learning Resource Centers Information Commons,

Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Salisbury, North Carolina

Leo Lo, Head, McLure Education Library, University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa

Pauline Manaka, Research Librarian: Anthropology, Demography, Sociology and Women Studies, University of California-Irvine

Henry Mensch, Student, Syracuse University iSchool, San Francisco, California

Tom Moothart, Assistant Dean for Resource Services, Colorado State University Libraries, Fort Collins, Colorado

Toni Negro, Business, Construction, and Hospitality Librarian, Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, Maryland

Martha Parker, Librarian-in-Residence, University of Arkansas-Fayetteville

Alexandra Rivera, Student Enrichment and Community Outreach Librarian, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

Romelia Salinas, Reference Services Coordinator, California State University-Los Angeles

John C. Sandstrom, Acquisitions Librarian, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Lindsay C. Sarin, MLS Program Coordinator, University of Maryland-College Park

Tess Tobin, Administrative Services Librarian, New York City College of Technology-CUNY, Brooklyn, New York

Ngoc-Yen Tran, Outreach and Student Engagement Librarian, University of Oregon-Eugene

Jason Vance, Associate Professor/Information Literacy Librarian, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Joan Weeks, Senior Instruction Librarian, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Janice Welburn, Dean, University Libraries, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Amanda Wilson, Director, National Transportation Library, Washington, D.C.