

## Minnesota Library Association 2009

Wednesday October 14 we started out for MLA at 6a.m. Little did I know that in that wee dark hour I would grab the wrong book bag, and leave my book for Cathy Wurzer to sign at home. But the day turned out to be great.

The first session I attended was called "ALA Strategic Planning Focus Group". Melissa J Brechon and Chris D. Olson were the facilitators. There were 6 questions presented to us. 1) What are the most important things ALA can do to help you as a Librarian or a Member? Advocacy on the state and local, lobbying, filtering issues with the Patriot Act, cross pollination of Public Libraries and Academic Libraries, more virtual opportunities. 2) What are the most important things ALA can do for Libraries? Advocacy-intellectual freedom, return on investment study for each state, heighten profile of libraries, showcase model libraries, innovation rewards, look to the future. 3) What are the most important things ALA can do for the public? Standards-levels of professionalism, lessen the digital divide, more public relations, amenity vs. necessity, public safety. 4) What are the most pressing and important issues facing libraries and the profession? Economic crisis, expectations that libraries can pick up government and medical functions, know more about our clientele, talk the talk, attract younger individuals to the profession (its aging). 5) What do I see as my responsibility to ALA and the profession? Be forward thinking, stay up to date, accept change, do the best I can, interact and share experiences, mentor, speak the truth, courtesy to our customers. 6) What would you like to tell us about ALA, Libraries not asked? Recruiting for the future from diverse populations, ALA come to the Libraries to encourage, we're not just political, cost of membership is priced out, focus on the "big issues"-all things to all members, more sharing with local staffs.

Our lunch trip down Highway 61 was great. She showed parts of her DVD and it was very interesting. I watched it after I got home. I learned good north- country history listening to her. I thought the lunch was good too.

With our hope for expansion here in Fergus Falls, I attended the "Developing a Facilities Master Plan" session. This was presented by Susan Nemitz, Ramsey County Library Director; Sandy Walsh, Deputy Director for Ramsey County Libraries; and Jane Dederling from HGA Architects. It was very interesting to go through the "planning process" with these people. From what is the master plan, philosophic assessment, current state, current conditions, current trends, and reality—this factor I thought was very important. What do we really need, what resources do we have, and what can we really accomplish?

We had a good amount of time to spend with the vendors. Since I don't deal with them personally I didn't think their PR was the best.

Mary Jo Igelstad  
Fergus Falls Public Library Assistant

