

**ARLIS/NA 2003
FINAL CONFERENCE REPORT
Baltimore, MD**

Submitted by Linda Tompkins-Baldwin, Local Arrangements Chair

A formal proposal to have the ARLIS/NA conference in Baltimore was first made to the board at their mid-year meeting in 1999. This was followed by an invitation from the ARLIS/DC-MD-VA chapter during the membership meeting at the 2000 conference in Pittsburgh. A committee was soon formed consisting of Linda Tompkins-Baldwin as local arrangements chair and Kathleen Stacey as programs chair. Committee chairs assigned were Pat Lynagh as registration, Anita Carrico as exhibitions, Claudia Covert as fundraising, Katherine Cowan as Internet room/web site manager, Don Juedes as publications, advertising and signs, and Marjorie Chenoweth as tours & transportation. However, during the 2001 conference, the board decided that the chair of the development committee should also head up the conference fund raising committee so Gregg Most took over that position. Another change to the committee came in 2001 when Kathleen Stacey withdrew from being programs chair and Joan Stahl took over the position. Since the conference hotel offered web TV in every guest room, it was decided not to have an Internet room. This allowed Katherine Cowan to focus on the web site management. Fortunately, all the changes took place very early and did not involve any period of transition.

Local Arrangements

The local arrangements chair sent out requests for proposals to five hotels that were likely candidates to host the conference based on their size and number of meeting spaces. Of these, three responded and visits were made to see the facilities. Repeated efforts to get a response from the other two were not successful. These are very large hotels that usually handle much bigger conferences than ARLIS. Of the three visited, two were quickly eliminated because they lacked enough meeting space. The Wyndham had the meeting space and was eager to book ARLIS because they had another group in during our time frame that only wanted sleeping rooms. This also determined when the conference would take place. Once the facility was identified, headquarters took over negotiations. As the conference program was finalized, we realized that we had not requested enough meeting space. The hotel was amenable to additional space, especially since the other group in the hotel was not using any. This is a difficult issue because the hotel has to be arranged before program proposals are received. We were fortunate that they were able to accommodate all our meeting space needs.

The budget was written based on the final figures from Los Angeles. The St. Louis budget was not really appropriate because of the joint nature of the conference. As the conference approached, it became obvious that income was way behind other conferences. Workshops, tours, and special events did not do very well. The slumping economy and impending war with Iraq were the biggest factors affecting registration. Many participants had their budgets cut and were paying more out-of-pocket for their travel expenses. Also, the wide variety of attractions in the area vied for attendees' time. Cost cutting really helped to keep the budget from going over. It was decided not to have conference bags printed. The Freer/Sackler donated plastic bags for a savings of over \$1,000. Using Kinko's instead of the hotel business center provided some cost savings, too. Further savings in printing costs were realized by combining the exhibitors'

prospectus and preliminary program. The Wyndham offered a special rate of \$99 per night for conference workers. By using this rate for all of headquarters' staff, ARLIS saved money by having enough complimentary rooms to cover their obligations to board members and conference chairs. More relief arrived in the form of monies from the Speaker's Fund. Additionally, going back to several of the speakers and renegotiating their fees resulted in substantial savings. Another help to the budget was the result of CPAC deciding to raise registration and exhibitors fees. Although all the final expenses are not in, it currently looks like the conference might break even.

Attendance at the special events was very good when they were free. Although not well attended, the two pay events were very well received by those who did. Following is a brief summary of each event.

Elvis Lecture – Dr. Gary Vikan gave an extremely entertaining and engaging talk. The event was well attended and Dr. Vikan donated his time.

Welcome Party – To keep costs down, a cash bar was utilized. Food items were purchased in bulk rather than per person for a substantial savings. The band did a great job of keeping the volume down enough for people to talk, but still got people out on the dance floor.

Movie Night – Although not well attended, this was an extremely popular event with those that did show up. The fee for this event was extremely low, but it was scheduled in the pre-conference time slot so many people did not want to come early and pay for an additional hotel night. Scheduling an event like this in the middle of the conference would probably have generated better attendance.

Opening Plenary – Dr. Martin was an excellent speaker and was very open to discussion with attendees after his talk. He donated his time and expenses.

Membership Luncheon – This event was well attended and costs were kept down by negotiating with the hotel for a lunch choice that was not on their menu. Several problems arose from the hotel not providing special menus that were requested, ten people attended the luncheon that had not paid, and seven people requested special diet meals that they had not signed up for them. It was recommended that in the future, people requiring special diets be given a ticket to turn in for their meal and that if they do not have a ticket, they do not get a special meal. Charles Duff, the luncheon speaker, was very popular with the audience, but his talk went over. To accommodate this, the afternoon sessions began late and the membership meeting was compressed. This could have been alleviated if more time had been allowed between the luncheon and the membership meeting.

Convocation – In order to avoid the problem presented by the Getty's small auditorium, the convocation and the reception were held at adjacent sites. Johns Hopkins University donated the use of Shriver Auditorium and all associated expenses. Special guest, Joyce Scott, did an excellent job of keeping the convocation fresh and interesting. The Baltimore Museum of Art donated all the facilities, furnishings, and personnel for the reception. Additional savings were realized by the cater selling us the wine at cost. The band did an excellent job of keeping the volume down so as not to impede conversation, but generated quite a bit of interest. The event was well attended and seemed to be quite successful.

Cocktail Reception – This was an extremely popular event with the exhibitors. Unlike the silent auctions of the past, there wasn't anything to distract from the exhibitors' wares. This also proved to be an excellent time to schedule a demo for Wilson, who, in turn, sponsored the event. It was originally going to be an open bar for the first hour and a cash bar for the second one. At the last minute, it was decided to make it open the entire time. Although this was a good idea, it would have been nice if the decision had been made early enough to advertise.

Leadership Breakfast – The most successful feature of this event was the menu. It was chosen because of the wide variety of items it offered. This kept us from having to order any special diet menus and from people asking the staff for special accommodations.

Closing Plenary Session – Camille Paglia is possibly one of the biggest names we have had at an ARLIS conference. We owe a great deal to the speakers' fund for her presence. Her session was well attended and she was very generous with her time, staying quite awhile after to give autographs and to talk to attendees.

Poe Party – This event was put together when all other fund-raising ideas fell through. It was patterned after the highly successful closing event held at the St. Louis conference. Although not well attended, it was a lovely event. Costs were kept down as much as possible by using the furniture available at the Westminster, a local winery agreed to provide wine at cost, and the caterer was the most competitive in the area. Another factor in the poor attendance was that many people left the conference before the party began.

We were fortunate to have two rooms available for self-scheduled meetings at this conference. In large part, this went very well. However, procedures for handling catering and equipment requests need to be developed. Catering and equipment were not available unless paid for so the question became who was responsible for arranging these services. Some of the groups went through us, while others went directly to the hotel. If they did not go through us, we had to release the room before the hotel could make arrangements for them. If equipment was ordered through us, they could get in on the ARLIS rate, but some did not know that and went to the hotel first. Although it is more work, it would probably be best if all catering and equipment went through the local arrangements chair. However, ARLIS might consider a surcharge for this service to cover the extra costs involved.

PROGRAMS CHAIR REPORT

Submitted by Joan Stahl

As Conference Co-Chair (Programs), I am happy to report that the program part of this year's annual Conference was largely successful. Some early decisions made the program development easier:

1. to start soliciting program ideas before the annual conference in St. Louis
2. to reduce the length of a session to 90 minutes
3. to have session planners slot their session into a particular category (e.g., reference, technical services, etc.) and a particular format (panel, point / counterpoint, etc.)
4. to encourage the inclusion of outside (non-ARLIS speakers) at sessions
5. to emphasize that sponsorship of a session by a division or committee was unnecessary

6. to commit to more sessions than we have had at past conferences, because program content was a priority
7. to balance programs, so there was wide variety that reflected the interests of the entire membership
8. to bolster / promote poster sessions
9. to introduce the “paper” as a new format for a session
10. to have the Conference Planning Committee propose sessions, when and if they detected significant gaps in the session proposals that were received.

We received a record number of session proposals, in excess of 70. The Conference Planning Committee carefully scrutinized the proposals, and made many suggestions to strengthen the proposals. For example, if the Committee thought the topic proposed was interesting, but had doubts about the format being the most effective presentation or the proposed speaker being lively enough, we countered with other ideas. After getting consensus from both the Conference Planning Committee and the Executive Board, the session planning proceeded smoothly.

All the sessions went forward as planned with the exception of one poster session that did not take place because the presenter was unable to get to the Conference. A speaker for the session on planning for library technology cancelled at the last minute, but the session moderator successfully got a replacement speaker. This year’s Conference had more sessions and workshops than Conferences in the recent past and many conference attendees approached me to say that they were pleased with the content and torn because they wanted to attend sessions that were scheduled opposite one another. The Plenary sessions, planned by Linda Tompkins-Baldwin, were most successful, as were the majority of the individual conference sessions and workshops; a fuller assessment will come from attendees via their evaluation forms.

Post-Conference, I wrote to the session planners. One complaint emerged and that had to do with the equipment at the hotel. Those speakers using slides found that the remote for the slides stopped working because the batteries died. This happened over and over.

From my vantage point, I see room for improvements in three areas:

1. Session planners need to know, at the outset, the amount of the honorarium they can offer to an outside speaker. I would encourage the Executive Board to determine a fee that takes geographic proximity into account; for example, if an outside speaker is within 50 miles of the Conference site, he / she will receive “X” amount, and if he / she is beyond that range, he / she will receive “Y” amount. I further recommend that each speaker be sent a contract, from Headquarters, that clearly states the amount of the honorarium and that explains that the honorarium is not meant to cover travel and lodging. The speaker should sign and date the document and return it to Headquarters. In this way, Headquarters can have the speaker’s name / address on file for the purpose of issuing a check, and the session organizer is not put in the uncomfortable position of negotiating with speakers.
2. Equipment that is / is not available to speakers is best determined at the beginning of the planning process. I received many, many questions about the equipment. I suggest that a list of available equipment be part of the contract that is sent to each speaker. The speaker can then check off the equipment he / she will need.
3. Workshops are a bit of a dilemma. To be profitable, they should be reasonably priced and accommodate many attendees, but most workshop planners want them to be limited

to less than 30 attendees. Traditionally, workshops are held during the first two days of the Conference. In these difficult economic times, attendees are shortening their stay at the Conference and arriving later. I think the Executive Board should re-evaluate the role of Workshops at the conference.

Lastly, I also received the requests for business meetings from Divisions and Committees. From this Conference Co-Chair's perspective, the scheduling of these meetings is difficult. Because there are so many groups that want to meet, these meetings impact on the number of conference sessions that can be offered. The self-scheduling option that was introduced this year was successful and introduces a viable alternative. The Executive Board has been working to simplify the organizational structure and I am in full support of that direction. We want the business of the Society to take place at the Conference and we want to encourage involvement from the membership, but often the business meetings cater to a small group and a limited amount of Society business is transacted at the Conference.

COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORTS

Registration/Hospitality Desk Coordinator

Submitted by Pat Lynagh

In the fall, I began contacting institutions to obtain brochures, discounts*, maps, train schedules, etc. for the Information Desk. All were very cooperative in providing these handouts to me. I asked for enough for all attendees (c. 500) from some institutions; from others I requested 250.

The Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association was extremely helpful. They provided a "Giveaway List" of organizations that would send free items. The Association itself also had materials, both free and at a cost.

I had all of these materials mailed to my home, as I wanted everything to be in one place and ready when the Conference began. My husband helped me to load the car with these many boxes and drove me to Baltimore. The Wyndham Hotel was helpful in unloading the car and taking the boxes to the room where we were working on the packets. Getting this amount of material to the hotel was a challenge.

The Conference Committee Chair assembled a list of members who had volunteered to work on the Registration/Information Desk. This was extremely helpful; as they had already filled in their phone numbers, email addresses, etc. when they registered. I then commandeered other members (and some non-members) who lived in or were familiar with Baltimore. Once I had this core list, I created an email group and contacted them, asking them to let me know what hours they would be available when the desks were open. I then created a form with one-hour slots and filled it in with the volunteers' names. Most were on the desk for one hour. There were a couple of emails back and forth to work out this scheduling; however, all were cooperative and by Conference time, we had a final schedule. All of the volunteers showed up when they were supposed to, and did a wonderful job of handing out packets and answering members' questions. I was on the desk a good deal of the time, and I tried to stop by whenever I was not assigned just to see how things were going.

As the Conference drew near, I received several email questions about registration, workshops, refunds, etc. I forwarded most of these on to Susan Rawlyk who was phenomenal in answering all of these questions promptly. In fact, Susan was indispensable throughout the whole process.

The only problem that we encountered was that materials were left out on the desks Tuesday night (3/25), with the understanding that we would have the desks (and the coat closet) until 9:30 AM Wednesday morning. When Susan and I arrived early Wednesday morning, all of the materials from the desks had been removed and nobody seemed to know where it went. They also moved materials out of the coat closet. So, we lost a great deal of material, some of which belonged to volunteers (map, notebook, etc.).

For next year, I would strongly encourage the Committee to provide a list of attendees for everyone's packet. Members expected this to be included. We only had a handful of these lists, and eventually had to go out to have more copies made. We still ran out. It is critical that the desks be located in close proximity to the management company's area, as many questions could only be answered by them. It was extremely convenient to have them nearby.

I expected some negative comments about the Freer/Sackler plastic bags. They were free, but lacked a certain "j'ne sais quoi". Some members told me, though, that they had a lot of ARLIS bags and never knew what to do with them. So they were glad that the bag was disposable. I don't know what the overall reaction to the bags was, however.

I enjoyed serving as Registration Coordinator, and all of my volunteers felt that working on the desks was a great experience and a wonderful opportunity to meet the attendees.

*DISCOUNT COUPONS

AMTRAK

10% discount with ARLIS password

Babe Ruth Birthplace

\$1 off admission

Baltimore Museum of Art

\$2 off admission by presenting ARLIS Conference badge

Baltimore Symphony

15% off ticket

Harborplace and The Gallery

Dining, shopping & entertainment savings certificates

National Aquarium

\$2.00 off admission

The Star-Spangled Banner Flag House and 1812 Museum

Bookmark entitles bearer to one complimentary adult admission with the purchase of a second admission of equal or greater value or 50% one adult admission

Top of the World

Present ARLIS Conference badge in lobby of the World Trade Center building and receive a complimentary ticket to visit the Observation Level on the 27th floor

Walters Art Gallery

Free admission by presenting ARLIS Conference badge

Web Site Manager

Submitted by Katherine Cowan

There is some vagueness about the relationship between the publicity role and the webmaster role. At this point, the website is clearly the main source of publicity and information for the conference. It was suggested at one CPAC meeting that all the content destined for the website be viewed and edited by the publicity coordinator, but in reality that did not happen--mostly people sent content directly to me, the webmaster, and in some cases I edited it for consistency, etc., which seemed natural but perhaps fell outside the webmaster role.

People throughout the organization were very positive about the website this year; however, the amount of information presented in the website was barely manageable as static html pages. I recently had the opportunity, as a project for a Cold Fusion class that I was taking at MICA, to redo the website (a scaled down version) as a dynamic html site, placing event descriptions into an MS Access database and writing Cold Fusion code to display the information on the program overview and daily schedule pages. Any updates to the event descriptions, speakers, locations, etc. could then be made in the database which would automatically transfer to any pages where the information was displayed (whereas with the static pages, each affected page had to be edited individually--a tedious process). This was clearly a better approach, but may not be practical unless webmasters with such skills are specifically recruited, and the hosting of the site would also become more complicated.

The self-schedule meeting feature seemed to work well, with having the Yahoo calendar for viewing the available time slots and one person serving as a moderator. The moderator would not necessarily have to be the webmaster, though, since anyone could monitor and update the Yahoo calendar and send the meeting information to the webmaster as it comes up.

Exhibits

Submitted by Anita Carrico

Forty-seven vendors exhibited at ARLIS/NA this year, using over 62 spaces. Most registered using the online registration forms through the conference website. (Note: many exhibitors registered after the deadline). The exhibition space at the hotel was wonderfully located right across from the registration desk with double-wide sets of doors opening into it. It was a very fortunate location as attendees wandered in and out of the space constantly. A mezzanine augmented the large hall and both accommodated all but two exhibitors. Those two had tables in the hallway outside the mezzanine.

Exhibit set-up took place on Sunday from 8 am to 12 noon and the exhibits opened with a reception/lunch at noon. Exhibits closed at 5 pm to give attendees time to be transported to the convocation. On Monday, The exhibition hall was open from 9 am – 12 noon, closing for the membership meeting and luncheon and reopening at 3 pm with cocktails from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. Exhibits were open again on Tuesday from 9 am – 1 pm with break-down from 1-3 pm. The hours were just right and the refreshments offered in the exhibit hall kept it filled with librarians.

The exhibits were very successful this year with mostly happy exhibitors and few complaints. That success is shared by the wonderful contributions of the exhibits volunteers, Janine Henri,

Elise Hill, Ellen Kempf and Deborah Ultan. And of course, from exhibitor registration to packing for home, nothing would have gone smoothly without Susan Rawlyk from ARLIS/NA headquarters.

Fund-raising

Submitted by Gregory P.J. Most

Raising money is rarely fun and never easy. This year proved to be no exception. The shaky financial markets, a stagnant economy, and the threat of war made many potential sponsors nervous and ultimately conservative in spending discretionary funds. Companies that a year or two ago would have been more than happy to make in-kind donations were much less inclined to be generous this year. Despite these rather gloomy conditions, fund-raising for the Baltimore conference was reasonably successful.

National Fundraising

The goal of raising \$35,000 was not met. However \$29,500 (as of 3/17/03) was raised from a wide variety of donors, many new to the Society. Many chapters generously made donations to underwrite the Welcome Party. While sponsorship of individual sessions was down from last year, both opening and closing plenary sessions were sponsored at a fee higher than in 2002. While no sponsors were found for tours, it is suggested to try this again next year.

Local Fundraising and In-Kind Donations

The two largest in-kind donations were received from the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU). The BMA donated the space and security staffing for the convocation reception while JHU hosted the conference website and provided the hall for the convocation. The value of these types of donations cannot be stressed enough as they make significant contribution to the financial success of the conference. The Maryland Institute College of Art provided vans for a tour and the museum shop at the Freer/Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian donated bags for conference materials. Woodhall Vineyards donated their excellent Maryland wine for the Poe Party at cost, and Gertrudes provided wine at cost for the Convocation. Café Hon gave five hundred promotional stickers to the committee for distribution at the 2002 conference.

Problems and Issues

This year, the fund-raising coordinator and the ARLIS/NA Development Committee (DevCom) chair were one in the same. While this has some obvious advantages – faster decision making and communication – it also created an enormous amount of work for one person in addition to his committee and work responsibilities. This situation also created occasional slight tension between the conference committee and the development chair. In future, I suggest (and indeed, it is being tried for the 2004 conference) that the local fund-raising coordinator be a member of the Development Committee, but not its chair. I also think the role of the Development Committee in conference fund-raising should be re-evaluated.

Solicitation of sponsors began a few weeks later than in the past. This is not normally a great problem as long as the DevCom members industriously begin making contact with potential donors. As stated above, sponsors were also tentative about making a commitment. Some said yes, and then pulled out. Alas, some committee members were not as industrious as others for various reasons. As a solution, the fund-raising prospectus will be revised and sent at the end of

August so that 2004 solicitation can begin promptly after Labor Day. New DevCom members replaced those rotating off the committee and will have a time line for contact, and follow-up calls. This will allow more time to make contact and to allow firms more time to make decisions that affect their budgets.

Local and in-kind fund-raising was a bit problematic, mainly because of the lack of response on the part of the donors. It was surprising to me how many people didn't respond to letters or e-mail (e.g. only one of fourteen Maryland wineries). Is it a sign of the times, or was it the location?

This conference did not hold a raffles or silent auction this year, but issues involving them did need to be addressed. The issue of non-profit status in Maryland and its seeming unwillingness (at least at the time) to recognize this aspect of ARLIS/NA will occur in other jurisdictions. How was this handled (or not) before and what should be done in the future. Getting the right prize for a raffle created a lot of work for no return. I rather think that holding a silent auction that is only open to the membership or attendees skirts the issue of obtaining a license or waiver from a taxing authority.

This really isn't a problem but was brought to my attention in my capacity as either conference fund-raiser or DevCom chair (I'm not sure which). The ambiguity of the intent of the Poe Party was mentioned to me by several members (about a dozen or so), as was the scheduled time. Some thought it was raising money for something – but what? The event held a slot frequently reserved for a fundraiser and given the cost of the ticket, higher than last year's anniversary party, I was asked about its focus. I really didn't have a good answer except to explain that renting a hall, hiring caterers, and providing entertainment is not inexpensive. While I personally like the idea of a "closing" party, it seems that the membership likes the idea of a cause to support, and may prefer an event held on Monday night, much like the old Ars Libri parties, when a significant number of conference participants are still available.

Tours

Submitted by Marjorie Chenoweth

Planning for tours for the 2003 ARLIS/NA conference began soon after the selection of Baltimore as the host city. I organized 23 tours in Baltimore and the surrounding area. These tours were grouped into the general categories of architectural tours, tours of Baltimore neighborhoods, tours of museums and historic houses, and a miscellaneous group that included a visit to a private collection of artists' books and a ghost walk. Of these 23 tours, 3 were repeated tours. Eventually 4 of the tours were cancelled due to lack of interest. Most of the cancelled tours were all-day tours scheduled for the day after the conference ended, Wednesday, March 25. This led me to believe that most people were unwilling to stay an extra day or 2 days just for a tour.

260 conference attendees participated in the tours, but few of the tours were sold out. The tours of greatest interest were those that were unique to Baltimore, particularly the Baltimore row house tour, the tour of the American Visionary Art Museum, and the Fells Point ghost walk. Several of the tours were planned with the help of the Baltimore Architecture Foundation, and the expertise of the tour leaders was much appreciated by the participants. Two other tours that were very popular were the tours that offered an opportunity to visit collections that otherwise would not be seen. These were the tours of the Manuscript Collection at the Walters Art Museum and a visit to a local book artist's personal artists' books collection.

An effort was made to keep the prices of the tours as low as possible, and I believe this was one of the positive aspects of this conference. We emphasized walking tours, used the water taxi, and in one case relied upon the use of a van owned by Maryland Institute College of Art. The transport company hired by headquarters was very efficient and, in most cases, the drivers were competent and friendly.

CONCLUSION

The nature of the ARLIS/NA annual conference itself presents a challenge. The conference is long; it requires a lot of meeting space; the membership wants a wide variety of programming, tours, workshops, and events; everybody wants plenty of free time for lunch, dinner, and touring; and they don't want to pay much for it. With all of this in mind, the 2003 annual conference was an overall success. All but two of the special events were free, the tours and workshops were very inexpensive, and there was quite a bit of free time. The committee members worked very well together, and, more importantly, worked extremely well independently. It is impossible to say enough positive about the support provided by Headquarters. They supplied much needed continuity that was crucial at times. Lastly, this was a very easy board to work with. They were committed to making this the best conference possible and did everything they could to help make it a success. The irony is that you know you could do it better next time, but it will be awhile before you'll want to do it again.