

Report on American Library Association Annual Conference  
Chicago, Illinois  
July 9-15, 2009

I was able to attend a variety of interesting program at the Annual Conference of the American Library Association in Chicago in July 2009. Attending ALA is always interesting for me because in addition to leading the Elmhurst College Library, I teach children's and adolescent literature so I am able to attend programs that address both areas of librarianship at the same conference. I was also able to spend considerable time in the exhibits connecting with the vendors we use on a regular basis and looking at new products for academic libraries. I was also able to talk with a number of children's and young adult authors and to learn about current and upcoming books in these genres.

On Saturday, July 10, I attended the President's Program of Association of School Librarians (AASL) entitle "Literacy Leadership and Librarian Flair: Engaging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Readers with Three Award Winning Young Adult and Children's Authors". At this program, Alan Sitomer, Laurie Halse Anderson, and Jacqueline Woodson discussed how their young adult novels inspire students to engage with reading and literacy. This was particularly interesting to me because I teach novels by these authors in my courses.

I was able to attend three programs that addresses multicultural literature and issues. "Authors Come in All Colors – Diversity in Literature" sponsored by ALTAFF introduced me to a number of writers of color who were new to me. These included Carleen Brice (Children of the Waters and the blog: White readers meet black authors), Marlon James (Book of Night Women), David Mura (Famous Suicides of the Japanese Empire), Bich Minh Nguyen (Short Girls), and Kimberla Lawson Roby (Deep Dark Secret). What Makes Tango Scary? Serving you Whole Library Population, Intellectual Freedom, and Censorship of LGBT Children's Books. ALA-GLBT Roundtable presented a panel of experts, including the authors and publisher of And Tango Makes Three (one of the top ten banned books in 2008). Chicago's Ethnic Mosaic: Cultural Identity and Neighborhood Change sponsored by ACRL ANSS was an interesting presentation by a panel of professors from Roosevelt, UIC, and DePaul that discussed Chicago's neighborhoods and how they have changed over time.

Books and Blogs: Made for Each Other? ALA Publishing: Booklist/Booklist Online was a panel of librarians and authors who write blogs about books and reading. They discussed how they use blogs to connect with their readers and users. They and the audience also reflected on blogging about books has changed over the last several years and the impact that this type of discussion has on writing, reviewing and library services.

Academic and Intellectual Freedom Climate on Campus: Are Our Freedoms Secure in the Next Generation? sponsored by ACRL was a very interesting program presented by James Neal of Columbia University, Barbara Fister of Gustavus Adolphus College, and Shawn Healy of the McCormick Freedom Foundation. They presented an interesting

overview of the intellectual and academic freedom issues facing colleges and universities. Barbara Fister talked extensively about the ways she and her librarians are trying to incorporate ideas about intellectual freedom into their information literacy program and to inspire their students to become actively involved in these issues.

Finally, I attend a very informative and provocative talk featuring Thomas S. Blanton, director of the National Security Archive at George Washington University entitled “The Secrecy Hangover”. Blanton detailed the history of national security issues from the Nixon administration to the present. His topics included the 1960s FBI visits to campuses to find people with foreign sounding names, the library awareness program, the classification and declassification of government documents, Bush administration wiretapping, and the approach of the Obama administration to secrecy and national security.

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