

I write my final President's column a month after the Midwinter Meeting in Seattle. You will read it as preparations for the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. are well underway. Despite that disconnect in time, I am confident that the level of enthusiasm will continue uninterrupted between the two events. Indeed, the Midwinter Meeting was highly charged with positive energy and excitement. The feelings are reignited if you listen to the numerous podcasts now found on the LITA blog. The LITA bloggers and podcasters were omnipresent reporting on all of the meetings and recording the musings of the LITA Top Tech Trendsters. By the time you have read this you will have also, hopefully, cast your ballot for LITA officers and directors after having had the opportunity to listen to brief podcast interviews with the candidates. The LITA Board approved the election podcasts at the Annual Conference in New Orleans. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of the nominating committee and the BIGWIG members, we have this new input into our voting decision-making.

The most exciting aspects of the Midwinter Meeting were the face-to-face, networking opportunities that make LITA so great. The LITA happy hour crowd filled the Six Arms bar and lit it up with the wonderful LITA glow badges. What was particularly gratifying to me was the number of new LITA members alongside those of us who have been around longer than we care to count. The networking that went on there was phenomenal! The other important networking opportunity for LITA members was the LITA Town Meeting led by LITA Vice President Mark Beatty. The room was packed with eager members ready to brainstorm about what they think LITA should be doing after consuming a wonderful breakfast. LITA's sponsored Emerging Leader, Michelle Boule, and Mark have collated the findings and will be working with the other emerging leaders to fine-tune a direction. The podcast interview of Michelle and Mark is an excellent summary of what you can expect in the next year when Mark is president.

As stated earlier, this is my last President's column, which means my term is winding down. Using LITA's strategic plan as a guide, I have worked with many of

you in LITA to ensure that we have a structure in place that allows us to be more adaptable to the rapidly changing world and to make sure that LITA is relevant to LITA members 365 X 24 X 7 and not just at conferences and LITA National Forum. Attracting and retaining new members is critical for the health of any organization and in that vein, Mark and I have used the ALA Emerging Leaders program as a jumping off point to work with LITA's Emerging Leaders. The BIGWIG group is fomenting with energy and excitement as they rally bloggers and have this past year launched the podcasting initiative and the LITA wiki. All of these things are making it easier for members to communicate about issues of interest in their work as well as to conduct LITA business. The LITA blog had over nine thousand downloads of its podcasts in the first three weeks after Midwinter which confirms the desire for these types of communications!

I appointed two task forces that provided recommendations to the LITA Board at Midwinter. The Assessment and Research Task Force has recommended that a permanent committee be established to monitor the collection of feedback and assessment data on LITA programs and services. Having an established assessment process will enable the board to know how well we are accomplishing our strategic plan and to keep us on the correct course to meet membership needs. The Education Working Group has recommended the merger of two committees, the Education and Regional Institutes Committees, into one Education Committee. This merged committee will develop a variety of educational opportunities including online and face-to-face sessions. We hope to have both of these committees up and going later in 2007. Happily, the feedback from the Town Meeting parallels the recommendations of the task forces. The board will be revisiting the strategic plan at the Annual Conference using information gathered at the Town Meeting. We will also be looking at what new services we should be initiating. All arrows seem to be pointing towards more educational and networking opportunities both virtual and in person. I anticipate that LITA members will see some great new things happening in the next year.

I have very much enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the LITA president this past year. The best part has been getting to know so many LITA members who have such creative ideas and who roll up their sleeves and dig in to get the work done. I am very grateful for everyone who has volunteered their time and talents to make LITA such a great organization.

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