SUMMARY OF SOCIETY’S YEAR

In looking back over my term, I have to say that the ARLIS/NA web site (AWS) redesign is potentially one of the most far reaching projects. I started lobbying for and working on a redesign as vice-president. Now, as I am about to become past-president, those beginnings and the efforts of many are coming to fruition. The most obvious problem with the AWS was the navigation. This has been addressed in the newly structured pages. But so much more has been set in motion with the redesign. The long-term implications are inspiring. We can build on the redesign to consider additions of content, we can explore using the AWS for functions such as the online purchase of publications, and we can expand use of the AWS for communication with members through foci such as news and periodic surveys. The possibilities will continue to unfold as we settle into using the new site. The Society’s thanks go to Publications Committee chair Jack Robertson for pursuing this so vigorously, and to current web master Nedda Ahmed and past web master Jonathan Franklin for all their work to implement this project. Others — including the Publications Committee, the Board, and the membership through the AWS survey — have provided valuable feedback. Ultimately it will be for the membership to make this website their own by contributing the content that will bring it to life and by offering suggestions for its continuous improvement.

A second major initiative which came to fruition this year after several years of preparation is the Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management. Jointly sponsored with VRA, the Summer Educational Institute “is intended to provide a standardized and sustainable program for visual resources training, with a focus on issues related to the transition from analog to digital collections” (per the website). The first institute was held in the summer of 2004, and was judged a great success by attendees and instructors alike. The second institute will be July 5-9, 2005 at Duke. The Society’s thanks go to Mary Wasserman and John Taormina the co-chairs for the first institute and substantially responsible for shaping the institute, and to Trudy Jacoby and Maureen Burns who have taken up the torch and serve as the current co-chairs.

Among the many other activities in which the Society has been engaged, the following stand out as having a strong potential for the future.
The membership voted on a dues structure revision and Bylaws changes resulting in a more flexible association. For example, the Bylaws were revised to allow the possibility of electronic voting.

The Development Committee chaired by Kim Collins, and in particular Allen Townsend combining the roles of past president and local conference development person, led the way in implementing an approach to development suggested by our Executive Director Elizabeth Clarke, offering sponsorship packages at various levels (gold, silver, etc.) to our supporters.

The Society Circle continued to grow in number and size of contributions, providing much appreciated support from individual members for the Society’s programs.

The management firm and select members of the Board explored such issues as chapter liability insurance and distance delivery of professional development, with resolution still pending.

The Professional Development Committee chaired by Heather Ball substantially revised the list of core competencies presented in draft at the New York conference. The competencies will be submitted for Board approval. The next step? Putting the competencies to use.

New entries in the Occasional Papers series were proposed and are now in progress under the guidance of editor Paul Glassman.

Art Documentation editors Kathy Zimon and Judy Dyki continue to produce the Society’s twice yearly journal, exhibiting a concern for quality and for the information needs of the field.

Award recipients were identified for a variety of awards, thanks to the hard work of the various awards committees and in many cases the sponsorship of our generous donors. This year was unique in the substantial addition of the Getty Latin American travel awards for art librarians, art information professionals, and visual resources curators residing in Latin America. The Getty awards are made possible through a grant from the Getty Foundation, applied for by Ted Goodman.

A Strategic Plan is being developed for 2006-2009, based on two surveys of the membership, an environmental scan, and discussion sessions at the Houston conference, under the leadership of co-chairs Leslie Abrams and Lucie Stylianopoulos.

The Nominating Committee chaired by Betsy Peck learned was successful in finding well-qualified candidates for office. The number of members interested in serving on the Executive Board was gratifying, and may eventually lead to changes in our procedures.

The Publications Committee chaired by Jack Robertson, taking the redesigned web site as the impetus, has reconstituted the positions of newsletter editor and Occasional Papers editor to include substantial web content responsibilities. These positions have been titled “News and Features Editor” and “Professional Resources Editor.” Recruitment has begun, and applicants will be interviewed at the Houston conference.
• The annual conference continues to be the Society’s major mode for interaction and planning. Although we have expanded greatly what we accomplish throughout the year, we rely on our annual gathering to plan, to discuss, to move forward both individually and as an association. The Houston conference planning team, led by local arrangements co-chairs Jon Evans and Mark Pompelia and program co-chairs Laura Schwartz and Elizabeth Schaub, fully cognizant of the importance of the conference and the many functions it serves, spent countless hours putting together a stellar conference experience. They have brought back some elements of past conferences, such as the silent auction, membership lunch and the Internet room, while bringing their unique approach in Houston’s unique environment. Enhancing the conference planning and promoting has been the conference web site created and maintained by Sam Duncan.

More on the Society’s year can be found in the Society annual report, in the public section of the ARLIS/NA web site!

STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION ITEMS FOR THE BOARD 2000-2005

As the Society is in the last year of its 2000-2005 Strategic Plan, several of the action items designated for Executive Board attention have been completed, as reported by Allen Townsend in last year’s President’s report. The ongoing items are primarily focused on raising visibility, including visibility with affiliated organizations, with graduate programs, and with sponsors. Although listed under the Executive Board, they are not of course a solely Executive Board responsibility.

The Executive Board acted on the Public Policy Committee recommendation that ARLIS/NA co-sign a letter from the Digital Future Coalition, to be sent to members of Congress asking for support of the Digital Media Consumers’ Rights Act.

The Executive Board will be considering various non-ARLIS venues in which ARLIS/NA is or could be promoted, weighing potential impact against the funds necessary to do the job effectively. Examples include advertising in ALA journals, setting up booths at conferences of other societies, and enhancing our current collaborations with affiliated associations.

We will soon have a new Strategic Plan. Many of the goals and objectives will be familiar. Some will be new, or newly conceived. It is my hope that for this plan we will not plot out action items for the next five years. Rather, determining feasible action items should be an annual endeavor, undertaken by each of the groups that compose the Society. In this way we will keep the plan fresh, viable and vital in the life of ARLIS/NA. Input from all groups will be needed, not just to identify action items, but to determine the most effective procedure to accomplish this task annually.
RAISING VISIBILITY

The Internship Award and the Gerd Muehsam Award both serve to raise visibility for ARLIS/NA in graduate programs. Hopefully the emerging student voice, currently the Student Affairs Discussion Group established at the New York conference, will contribute to this objective.

The International Relations Committee is charged with promoting ARLIS/NA in the context of IFLA, this past year submitting news items to the IFLA Arts Section newsletter. We also have Society liaisons to affiliate organizations. I would like to mention Amanda Bowen’s work with CAA this past year as worthy of note.

The efforts of the Development Committee to bring ARLIS/NA to the attention of sponsors are Herculean, ongoing, and much appreciated.

The Cataloging Advisory Committee through its many efforts represents ARLIS/NA in cataloging matters to the larger cataloging community. For instance, members of the Cataloging Advisory Committee serve on the American Library Association Subject Analysis Committee Task force on Named Buildings and other Headings. In addition, the CAC and in particular its committee member Lynda Bunting revised the NH Schedule for Photography, an alternative classification system to TR. This publication is posted to the ARLIS Web Site and freely available.

The Public Policy Committee formulated boilerplate statements to be issued in response to the news that an art library has been closed, or left to function without an art librarian. These documents stress the value of professional librarians as stewards of art library collections, as well as emphasizing the reference and research skills that librarians provide.

The Publications Committee subgroup led by Roger Lawson investigated and recommended that the Society enter into an agreement with EBSCO to provide Art Documentation in EBSCO full-text online databases, potentially bringing a much higher profile to Art Doc articles and authors, and thereby to the association.

The redesign of the web site puts us in a good position to pursue action items relating to visibility. Indeed the Membership Committee chaired by Janine Henri has already taken the initiative in using the newly designed web site home page to highlight the expertise of one of our members. I have also prepared a Society Annual Report for posting on the public pages of the ARLIS Web Site. Although somewhat duplicative of this report, it is written with a different audience in mind, and is arranged according to the Goals / Objectives of the current Strategic Plan.
ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

MEETINGS ATTENDED

- ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, New York City (Pre-Conference Board meeting as vice-president, and Post-Conference Executive Board meeting as president)
- Conference Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) Meetings, Houston
- ARLIS/NA Mid-Year Executive Board Meeting, Calgary
- ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, Houston (Pre-Conference Board meeting as president, and Post-Conference Executive Board meeting as past president)
- ALA San Diego and ALA Orlando conferences: affiliates meetings

PUBLICATIONS and DOCUMENTS

- Participated in the editing of the ARLIS/NA Handbook and List of Members, an effort led by the Administrative Documents Editor Ted Goodman, a position now eliminated based on the editor’s recommendation.
- Revised the management calendar in preparation for handing it over to incoming president Margaret Webster.
- Identified numerous policy manual changes, brought to Board for approval, and sent revised Policy Manual to web editor.
- Facilitated reciprocal ads between Art Documentation and ARLIS/UK’s Art Libraries Journal.
- Provided feedback to the Publications Committee and publications editors on several topics.
- Provided AWS Task Force with input concerning the structure and navigation of new ARLIS/NA web site.
- Prepared Society annual report.
- Examined, forwarded for Board approval, and signed contracts with EBSCO, and with the hotel for the Atlanta conference in 2007.

COMMITTEES

- Served as Executive Board liaison to the Nominating Committee, Distinguished Service Award Committee, and Strategic Planning Task Force. Provided Strategic Planning Task Force with input on survey results and the environmental scan.
- Served as a member of the Finance Committee.
- Discussed potential projects with the Membership Committee, Standards Committee, International Relations Committee, and Public Policy Committee.
COMMUNICATIONS

• In an effort to communicate regularly with the membership, I sent out monthly [on average] postings on ARLIS-L and contributed the President’s column to the Society newsletter *Update*. Through both means I solicited input from the membership with little success. Had the new AWS been in place I would have used that medium, hopefully to greater effect.
• I kept in touch with the Executive Director Elizabeth Clarke and incoming president Margaret Webster through monthly phone calls.
• I answered email queries from members in a timely fashion or forwarded the query to the appropriate source of information.
• I engaged in a series of emails with a self-selected group of ARLIS/NA members of five years or less with one objective being to gather input from representatives of this segment of the membership.
• Use of member email address to communication began to be a key mode of access. I used this mode to report the results of the Bylaws vote, and to send out renewal letters.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES

• Chaired the Houston Conference Planning Advisory Committee meeting in June.
• Supplied text for President’s “Welcome to Houston” for the conference web site; and a second welcome for the Program.
• Prepared a Welcome Party salutation, New Members Orientation agenda, Convocation remarks
• Participated in planning the Leadership Breakfast with the chapter leader and DSRT/Committee chair breakouts.
• Helped plan the Society Circle reception

BOARD ACTIVITIES

• Prepared Board agendas for New York post-conference Board meeting, Calgary mid-year board meeting, and Houston post-conference Board meeting.
• Served on Board subgroup to review the management firm.
• Prepared an agenda for the Board orientation in Houston.
• Lead Board in discussion of Strategic Planning priorities.
• Formed several task forces, including the travel awards task force, the chapter survey on distance delivery of professional development task force, special funding guidelines task force, and the membership directory task force.
• Monitored completion of Board action items as assigned during Executive Board meetings.
**INITIATIVES**

- Attempted to engage in some rudimentary “leadership development” by using the 2004 conference Leadership Breakfast as an opportunity to present Society issues and encourage discussion of those issues. This year’s Leadership Breakfast, under the guidance of incoming President Margaret Webster, will expand this approach to include breakout discussions of chapter leaders, and of DSRT and Committee leaders. I also formed an email group of young potential leaders, sharing with them Society issues and encouraging their responses.

- Facilitated a request for affiliation with the Society of Architectural Historians, currently in process.

- Encouraged select members to look once again at the issue of how the Society might gather and share peer statistics. This effort is also in progress.

- Asked the Public Policy Committee to prepare ARLIS/NA responses to potential future cut backs in art libraries and art librarian services, so that we will be prepared to respond in a timely fashion should the occasion arise.

- Assigned a Board Task Force to review the ARLIS/NA travel awards in light of the ongoing donations of members to the Travel Fund. The Society currently awards two $500 travel awards each year. Their recommendation will be presented to the Board at the Houston pre-conference Board meeting.

- Pursued a Strategic Plan item aimed at providing distance learning, contacting conference planners about videotaping the plenary session for possible future viewings at chapter meetings or through the web. It was decided that there was not a sufficiently documented interest to proceed. The chapter leaders were then queried about their interest, which proved to be lukewarm at best.

- Advocated shorter conferences, with the Houston conference reduced by one day as a result. The issue of conference length and other conference issues have been discussed by the Board, and more extensively with incoming President Margaret Webster and incoming Vice-president/President-elect Ann Whiteside.

- With the help of several Society members, compiled a list of venues in which the Society or its activities can be publicized. This will be presented to the Board to determine how to proceed.