Summary of the Society’s Year

The year began with some excitement and anticipation after the unveiling of the Assessment Task Force recommendations prior to the Atlanta conference and the subsequent discussions that took place during and following the conference. The 2007 Executive Board devoted considerable time throughout the year deliberating over the recommendations and member feedback. Six other taskforces also brought forward their reports with recommendations, and the Board dedicated time to determining which of the recommendations might be implemented at this juncture and how. The taskforce recommendations submitted came from the Nominations Taskforce, the Awards Taskforce, the Membership Taskforce, Education taskforce, the ARLIS/NA~VRA Joint Collaboration Taskforce, and the SEI Long-term Planning Taskforce.

Our past Boards are responsible for recognizing the necessity of forming these taskforces; challenging ARLIS/NA to reflect on our effectiveness and relevance. The culmination of the various assessments was presented to the 2007 Board for examination and review, from which we discussed and determined next steps.

Throughout the year, the Board was, also, presented with are variety of proposals, issues, and policy changes to consider; indicating an active, interested, and invested membership. The structural changes, exciting new initiatives, new fiscal, study and professional development opportunities proposed and approved by the Board further this sense of vitality. Despite the staffing obstacles presented by headquarters, the Board managed a productive year and was able to launch the new online directory, MemberClicks.

Many thanks go to this year’s Board for their time and effort given to critically reviewing every issue, recommendation, and idea presented. We had a dynamic, formidable group that took nothing lightly: ARLIS/NA was in good hands.

When I made my rounds at the Atlanta Conference to introduce myself as the incoming president, I suggested that we were headed for a year of transition. It was not my goal to necessarily implement as much as it was to strategize implementation of the structural changes being considered. However, a steady momentum brought many projects to completion. It was furthermore gratifying to include the membership in the process of reinforcing some of the proposed changes by presenting a ballot for voting. ARLIS/NA now reflects many of the directions proposed by the seven taskforces; the effects of which are marked by the progress ARLIS/NA has made in meeting many of the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan 06-09.
The caveat to our moving into the implementation phase at a fairly strident pace meant leaving some of the nitty-gritty details behind. If I think of the Native American weavers who deliberately weave in small blemishes into their pieces or the slightly damaged, cracked teacups that are still used in Japanese tea ceremonies because they hold special meaning or value - because of their blemishes - I am reminded and comforted that nothing is perfect. So as reality might have it, while changes have officially been made, the Board leave some follow-up business: The structural and policy changes will need to be appropriately reflected on the web and in the administrative manuals and resources including a revised organizational chart, updated membership forms, further implementation of MemberClicks. The incoming Board is primed to take on these tasks.

The achievements highlighted in the following outline illustrate the progress ARLIS/NA made this year toward aligning its activities with the Strategic Plan 06-09. The year’s accomplishments, changes, and activities demonstrate the extensive collaboration and innovation our membership shares, and how much the Society relies on our members-as-leaders, an interactive and responsive environment.

The process and time involved in steering change is complex, and requires patience, integrity, and confidence. The 2007 Executive Board extended itself as much as possible to see that our attention was diligent in this regard, as we focused on our work on behalf of the Society.

**Goal I: To increase the effectiveness and support the professional growth of art librarians and visual resources professionals.**

- The Alternative Voices Speakers Fund serves to bring a diversity of voices to ARLIS/NA annual conferences by encouraging the participation of non-ARLIS/NA speakers from traditionally underrepresented racial or ethnic groups.

- The Merrill Smith Travel Award recognizes an active member of ARLIS/NA involved in the field of architecture, visual and/or print collections including librarians, visual resource curators, archivists, and students.

- The International Relations Committee Travel Study Program (Netherlands)

- The ARTstor sponsorship shifted in focus to supporting speakers. This generous contribution is intended to attract high quality, non-member speakers that will provide expert voices on topics potentially as diverse as visual literacy, networked environments, interoperability, digital media, intellectual property, and beyond.

- Meet the Vendors program: This new initiative brings together those ARLIS/NA members familiar with our exhibitors with those who are not at conferences to introduce them to vendors and encourage greater participation and interaction in the ARLIS.NA conference exhibit hall.

- The ARTechtonic program included in the Denver Conference exemplifies an innovative way members collaborate to educate fellow-ARLIS/NA members and colleagues on new and emerging technologies.
• Invited guest speakers and vendors to the conference that bring us closer in collaboration with professionals and leaders from other associations and related organizations: The College Art Association returned after many years as an exhibitor; the President of the American Library Association joined us at our Membership Meeting; and leadership advisor from Pattern Research, Inc. joined us at the Leadership Breakfast.

• The ARLIS~VRA Joint Collaboration recommendations offer suggestions for collaboration between the two organizations, as well as a guide to numerous other organizations that overlap interests.

• ARLIS/NA Twin Cities Chapter will host the second ARLIS/NA~VRA Joint Conference in 2011.

• The Summer Educational Institute Advisory Group was formed to focus on the long-term planning and growth of this evolving program.

Goal II: To foster the creation and dissemination of information, resources and standards in the field of art information and art librarianship.

• The Publications Committee announced the launch of a new ARLIS/NA publication, Cataloging Exhibition Publications: Best Practices—Title and Statement of Responsibility. The publication of best practices, created by the ARLIS/NA Cataloging Advisory Committee, is devoted to providing practical guidance to catalogers working with art exhibition publications.

• The ARLIS/NA archives will be relocated from Syracuse University to the University of Illinois for better organization, access, and context with other associations.

Goal III: To be an advocate for our members, the profession, and ARLIS/NA.

• The Membership Committee’s proposal to include an Introductory Membership was approved by the Board and voted on by the membership.

• ARLIS/NA was present at the American Library Association and represented in the exhibit hall and the Affiliate’s Group.

• The AWS was modified to release previously held administrative documents in the restricted ‘members-only’ area to be fully available from the website without the member password.

Goal IV: To strengthen and increase the effectiveness of ARLIS/NA’s activities and operations.

• The Committee for Committee Chairs, a new group organized to bring committee chairs together, participated in a survey and determined committee standards that would assure the proper rotation of chairs and committee members. The resulting recommendations were with a few exceptions approved by the Board. The policy manual will be updated to reflect the standards. (Link)
• The Assessment Taskforce was charged to devise a new structure for ARLIS/NA that would provide continuity and action between conferences, including how the Society might be better equipped with technological opportunities or platforms that would further support more and effective communication between members throughout a year. Based on the feedback distributed to the 2007 Executive Board from individual members, committees, and other groups the EB spent a significant amount of time reviewing and discussing the recommendations. Before implementing anything the first half of the year, the Board experimented with a revised EB structure, a hybrid structure. The hybrid structure allowed us to combine the old roles with the new (functionally-oriented) roles. It was determined that the new structure made sense and was subsequently put forward to the membership for a vote to accept the new configuration. By February 15, 2008 two hundred members voted with majority approving the change. The functional roles on the Board will increase visibility of our interests and activities rather than a focus on geographical representation. A seat for a Canadian Board member has been preserved, however. (Link)

• The new online directory MemberClicks was launched in April 2008. Its functionality will ensure that membership information is current and offers search features that provide an easy way to find other members, colleagues, vendors, subject groups, committees, and so on. While members are able to print from the directory the option to purchase a bound handbook/directory from a print-on-demand source is being investigated.

• In December 2007, the Board requested that one of the members-at-large positions within the Communications & Publications Committee serve as the ARLIS/NA Technology Advisor. This position was initially expected to assess the current uses of technology in ARLIS/NA. Recommendations will be reviewed that advise on options that would enhance activities, and everyday networking, dialog and project sharing.

• Association Management options and models: Headquarters experienced staffing issues, which presented challenges for the Executive Board. The loss of staff at McPhersonClarke caused considerable delays with member renewals, launching MemberClicks, and conference planning. The repercussions of our management firm’s inability to have properly handled their issues may affect our future with their services. The contract continues with McPhersonClarke through December 2009. The Board will be reviewing other options and other association models for managing administrative work.

**Statistical Highlights of the year:**

• Membership as of October 2007 (when membership renewals began to be applied to 2008) was 1,047. As the Membership Committee reports: “Although the number has not fallen off shockingly, it is important that membership numbers be monitored closely for the next few years.”

• Sponsorships this year were strong and the Development Committee raised 39% over the established goal with a total above $35,000. (link)

• Conference attendance jumped from a last year’s number of 430 to 560.

**Committee Highlights**
• The Development Committee announced that fifty sponsors generously provided more than $35,000 in support of the 2008 annual conference in Denver. These contributions collectively enable ARLIS/NA to fulfill its mission to foster excellence in the field through the sharing of ideas, the funding of awards, and the opportunity for networking.

• The Professional Development Committee revised its structure to now include the Education Subcommittee and the Mentorship Subcommittee. This formation will help to realize the priority for activity and initiatives in education and the mentorship program. (Link)

• The Publications Committee:
  o Has become the Communications and Publications Committee to better reflect the activities of the committee.
  o Art Doc mailings will be sent from the U.S. and printed in the U.S. from now on. The new printing house is well known at Ion Communications, so we are confident that the work will be done well and will provide a savings of approx. $4,500 for ARLIS/NA per issue.
  o Member's Handbook will be archived annually in a PDF version on the ARLIS/NA website. Policies- C7, W-3, and eventually a revision of R-26 will reflect this change.

Task Force Highlights:
• ARLIS/NA and the Visual Resources Association (VRA) Joint Task Force on Collaboration was established to investigate the relationship between the two associations and to recommend collaborative possibilities. The final report was presented to both Boards in February 2008. Progress in response to the recommendations is already underway, with the joint conference in 2012 and the formation of the SEI Advisory group.

• Membership Taskforce recommended that ARLIS/NA raise the dues. Ten years ago was the last increase. The EB voted on a new schedule, which will be proposed to the membership for a vote this coming summer.

• Nominations TF proposed a new process that invites input from the membership on candidates and updated the criteria to be more specific.

• Awards TF revised the announcement schedule to coordinate the output and receipt of invitations for nominations.

• Education TF recommended there be some sort of education committee or group. The result of the recommendation is the formation of the Education Sub-committee which will serve within the PDC.

Ballot Results:
On February 15th the ARLIS/NA Executive Board mailed a ballot regarding proposed changes to the ARLIS/NA Bylaws. A total of 233 members voted.
• Add an Introductory Membership - Yes = 228; No = 5
• Allow electronic voting - Yes = 232; No = 0 (1 abstention)
• Change the Executive Board Regional Representative positions to Functional Liaisons - Yes = 201; No = 29 (3 abstentions)
• Change nomination process to allow members to participate by nominating candidates - Yes = 223; No = 8 (2 abstentions)
• Dissolution of Round Tables in favor of Special Interest Groups - Yes = 226; No = 5 (2 abstentions)

**Conference Invitations accepted:**
• Boston 2010
• Toronto 2012

**Meetings President attended:**
Post Conference EB Mtg, Atlanta, GA
ALA, Washington, D.C.
Denver CPAC, Denver, CO
ARLIS/NA Twin Cities Chapter, Mpls, MN
Mid-yr EB Mtg, Mpls, MN

Respectfully Submitted,
Deborah K. Ultan Boudewyns
President, ARLIS/NA