Annual Report 2008
ARLIS/NA Membership Committee

Submitted by: Shalimar Fojas White (shalimar.white@artstor.org; tel. 212-500-2404)

Membership Committee for 2008-2009
Chair: Shalimar Fojas White
Committee Members: Laurel Bliss, Margaret Boylan, Bryan Loar, Jill Luedke, Ian McDermott, Alyssa Resnick, Eva Revitt
Board Liaison: Amy Trendler

Membership Committee for 2009-2010
Chair: Shalimar Fojas White
Committee Members: Laurel Bliss, Caroline Culbert, Jamie Lausch, Bryan Loar, Jill Luedke, Ian McDermott, Eva Revitt
Board Liaison: Kim Collins

I. Membership Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009 Renewals by membership type</th>
<th>Current 2009 members (as of 4/6/09)</th>
<th>Baseline 2008 members (as of 6/10/08)</th>
<th>Current 2009 members as percentage of 2008 baseline</th>
<th>2009 new members</th>
<th>2008 non-renewals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Unemployed</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>109%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorary</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>116%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Individuals</strong></td>
<td><strong>823</strong></td>
<td><strong>867</strong></td>
<td><strong>95%</strong></td>
<td><strong>186</strong></td>
<td><strong>309</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Affiliate</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>121%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL MEMBERS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>1052</strong></td>
<td><strong>1105</strong></td>
<td><strong>95%</strong></td>
<td><strong>208</strong></td>
<td><strong>358</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are the membership numbers as of April 6, 2009. The total number of members (1052) is lower than last year, when compared to the baseline for 2008 membership numbers (1105), as of June 10, 2008 (the last time that the Membership Committee
received an official membership report from ARLIS/NA HQ). Judging from the baseline numbers, renewals have brought the 2009 membership numbers to 95% of the 2008 levels.

However, while the total number of 2009 members is lower than last year, it is within the range of totals from previous years: 1105 in 2008, 1047 in 2007, 1139 in 2006, 1131 in 2005, 1179 in 2004, and 1025 in 2003. Given the increase in membership dues introduced during the renewals cycle and the current economic downturn, 2009 renewals have been relatively resilient. All levels of membership are at least 95% of their 2008 levels, with the exception of two categories: Individual and Business Affiliate. There are considerable net losses in these two segments, which can likely be attributed to the aforementioned factors. These two membership levels had their fees increased by the greatest amount (+$35 for Individual and +45 for Business Affiliate) and are therefore more sensitive to the cost and budget cuts that are currently affecting individuals and institutions.

It should be noted, however, that new memberships (208) have offset the effect of non-renewals (358) to some degree. In particular, the number of 2009 new student memberships (108) has more than replaced the loss of 2008 non-renewing students (102). The new Introductory membership level has also attracted new members. Based on these results, the committee’s recommendations on last year’s dues increase proposal from the Board (to keep the rate of increase for Student memberships lower than other membership types and to add the Introductory level) appear to have been justified.

II. Committee Activities

1) **Dues Increase Vote**

The Membership Committee worked with the ARLIS/NA President on a message to the membership announcing the increase in membership dues. After a number of members replied to Ken Soehner’s post to ARLIS-L (9/28/08), the Membership Committee developed a message to provide background to the decision-making process, which was posted to the listserv on 9/30/08. The vote remained open to members until 11/3/08, at which point the new fees were approved.

Based on feedback from members, who expressed some confusion with the voting process, the Membership Committee drafted a subsequent post to ARLIS-L (10/27/08). This message outlined instructions for how to vote via MemberClicks and also prompted members to update their member profiles. The committee thought it would be helpful to encourage members to do this in anticipation of the renewal reminders that would go out via MemberClicks once the voting period had closed.

In the meantime, the committee reviewed the existing membership form. Pending the outcome of the vote, the group prepared two versions of the form – one with the existing fees and another with the new proposed fees. Once the vote had passed, the committee worked with ARLIS/NA HQ to implement the changes on both the printed and online membership forms. The committee chair also participated in the testing of the online form. Unfortunately, the timing of the feedback process created a time lag between the end of the voting period (early November) and the posting of the updated online form (late November).

2) **Membership Renewals**

The Membership Committee chair worked with the chair of the Development Committee, Barbara Rockenbach, to draft the President’s letter to the membership. This letter outlined
membership benefits and encouraged members to donate to the Society. The message was distributed to individuals through MemberClicks on 11/24/08.

In addition, the committee developed a strategy for outreach based on the group’s observation that since ARLIS/NA HQ sends the main renewal reminder via personalized email merge through MemberClicks, members with out-of-date emails would not receive the message. Also, those members at institutions with Spam filters that block email from arilsna.org might be similarly affected. The Membership Committee thought it would be helpful to supplement the MemberClicks messages (the President’s letter and renewal reminders) with additional outreach. These took the form of listserv posts to ARLIS-L that contained calls to action, such as reminders to update one’s profile in MemberClicks to collect current email addresses. Other posts outlined member benefits like the President’s letter, but reached the entire membership via the listserv, rather than individual current members. The committee also developed additional outreach to new members and non-renewals, which are described in a following section.

Due to the timing of the dues increase vote and the delayed posting of the online form at the end of November, the Membership Committee did not have much time to initiate its outreach efforts for membership renewals. Not wanting to point members to the old form, the committee did not begin direct messaging until the online form was updated. Despite the short time period available, the committee was able to develop, draft, and send out the following:

- **ARLIS-L** listserv post – “soft reminder” to urge members to update their profiles in MemberClicks anticipation of the President’s renewal letter to the membership (11/6/08)

- MemberClicks renewal reminders – a series of 4 renewal messages, which were sent to individual members via their MemberClicks profiles, based on the renewal deadline of December 31, 2008.
  - 30 days out (11/28/08)
  - 15 days out (12/15/08)
  - 1 day before (12/30/08)
  - 1 week after due date (1/7/09)

- **ARLIS-L** listserv post – message highlighting specific member benefits and urging members to renew before the end of the year (12/19/08)

- **ARLIS-L** listserv post – at the suggestion of the Board, the committee developed a message to provide the membership with an update on 2009 renewals (3/9/09)

- Final MemberClicks renewal reminder – message sent to 2008 non-renewals via their MemberClicks profiles, encouraging them to renew before the extended early bird conference registration deadline on April 1, 2009 (3/26/09)

### 3) Additional Renewals Outreach

In addition to the outreach efforts described above, the Membership Committee decided to target specific groups with personalized email messages: 2008 new members and 2007 non-renewals. The committee believed that this strategy would be effective in establishing a personal connection between members and a committee member, thereby encouraging that member to renew their membership. To this end, the Membership Committee decided to create geographic assignments for each committee member. This way, the work of
contacting new members and non-renewals could be distributed among the group. Also, this geographic focus would lay the foundation for direct outreach to chapters in each assigned region. Given the existing geographic distribution of the committee members, most were assigned their “home” chapter with some additional coverage. Once the geographic assignments were determined, the committee chair was able to generate mailing lists for the committee members. This was accomplished by exporting member profiles from MemberClicks, sorting them according to state, and then grouping the contacts according to the geographic regions listed below.

3a) Geographic Assignments

- **Eva Revitt - Canada** ([http://www.arliscanada.ca/](http://www.arliscanada.ca/))
- **Margaret Boylan - Midwest Region I**
  - ARLIS/Central Plains: [http://arliscp.library.okstate.edu/](http://arliscp.library.okstate.edu/)
  - ARLIS/Midstates: [http://www.indiana.edu/~arlimsid/](http://www.indiana.edu/~arlimsid/)
- **Bryan Loar - Midwest Region II**
- **Ian McDermott - Northeast Region I**
  - ARLIS/Western New York: [http://etc.buffalo.edu/arliswny/](http://etc.buffalo.edu/arliswny/)
- **Jill Luedke - Northeast Region II**
- **Shalimar Fojas White - South Region**
  - ARLIS/Southeast: [http://www.arlis-se.org/](http://www.arlis-se.org/)
- **Alyssa Resnick - West Region I**
  - ARLIS/Northern California: [http://elmo.academyart.edu/arlisna_nc.html](http://elmo.academyart.edu/arlisna_nc.html)
- **Laurel Bliss - West Region II**
  - ARLIS/Mountain West: [http://www.lib.byu.edu/arlismw](http://www.lib.byu.edu/arlismw)

3b) Contacting 2008 new members

New members receive a Welcome packet, which was developed by last year’s committee. This packet consists of a letter for new members, a “Get Involved” flyer listing groups for new members to join, and a promotional flyer for ArLiSNAP. The letter and attachments are sent to individual members via MemberClicks in a personalized email merge. The committee chair must monitor new memberships periodically to send these mailings. In the future, it would be helpful to configure MemberClicks to send this message automatically within a month of new members joining.

During the renewals cycle, the Membership Committee also conducted targeted outreach to 2008 new members. The committee developed and drafted an email message that outlined member benefits and encouraged new members to renew for 2009. The letter also invited the new member to contact the committee member sending the note should they have any questions about the renewal process or ARLIS/NA. Each message was signed by the
committee member in the relevant geographic region and sent via their personal email. This was done in an effort to give the new member an additional point of contact within the Society, who was also geographically proximate. This email campaign was undertaken at the end of December 2008.

3c) Contacting 2007 non-renewals

The committee used a similar process to contact members who did not renew in 2008 (memberships expired on 12/31/07). As with the new member mailings, the committee developed and drafted an email message that encouraged the member to renew for 2009. The message included brief questions for those who would not be renewing, which were designed to ascertain why they did not do so and what the Society could do to better serve member needs in the future. Again, each message was signed by the committee member and sent from their personal email, according to the geographic contact lists exported from MemberClicks. This second email campaign was also undertaken at the end of December 2008.

Membership Committee initially planned to contact members who did not renew in 2007 (memberships expired on 12/31/06). But, given the truncated time period for renewal outreach and the holiday season, this was not possible this year. It was noted with the 2007 non-renewal campaign that many expired members lacked email addresses in their online profiles, or that some existing emails were not current. The committee also investigated the possibility of contacting members without email addresses in their online profiles. The committee chair generated a report from MemberClicks, but the time needed to do online research or initiate phone contact with each expired member was prohibitive given the time constraints.

4) ARLIS/NA Website

The Membership Committee maintains a page on the ARLIS/NA website: http://www.arlisna.org/organization/com/membership/index.html. It lists the committee’s members, mission, annual reports, conference meeting minutes, and guidelines for the “What Our Members Are Saying...” section. Additionally, the committee works with ARLIS/NA HQ to update the “Join ARLIS/NA” page (http://www.arlisna.org/join.html) with current renewal instructions and forms.

The “What Our Members Are Saying...” feature continues to be a popular section of the ARLIS/NA website: http://www.arlisna.org/saying.html. Cate Cooney, ARLIS/NA Chapters Coordinator, approached the committee chair with a request to feature specific chapters in this section. Committee member, Bryan Loar, developed the current item highlighting a chapter officer from the Midstates Chapter, which is hosting this year’s annual conference.

5) 2008 Conference Activities

The Membership Committee will hold its business meeting at the 37th annual conference on April 18, 2009 from 5:30 – 6:30 PM. In addition, committee will reprise the ARLIS/NA Membership Information table, which was introduced at last year’s conference. To improve traffic, the committee requested that conference planners locate the table near the Hospitality Desk, rather than in the exhibitions hall. Committee members will oversee the table and provide members with information about the Society and assistance with the MemberClicks online directory.
6) **Member Queries**

The Membership Committee regularly responds to queries from members about benefits, renewal procedures, and membership status. Committee members are able to respond to some of these inquiries, such as explaining member benefits or instructing members on how to renew their memberships. Also, since the committee chair has Board-level access to the MemberClicks online directory, simple queries about membership status (e.g. whether an account active vs. expired) may also be fielded by the committee.

Members also contact committee members with questions about the status of their membership applications or renewals. Unfortunately, individual committee members are not able to ascertain the status of data entry or payment processing and cannot provide direct assistance. Therefore, the standard procedure is to forward the request directly to ARLIS/NA HQ. After forwarding the note, the committee member must rely on ARLIS/NA HQ to reply and resolve the issue. In some cases, the member has reached out to a committee member after an already unsuccessful attempt to contact ARLIS/NA HQ, making the experience doubly frustrating. This happened on several occasions, especially at the beginning of 2009, when HQ had a backlog of renewals to process from the end of 2008.

Many member inquires stem from the fact that they do not receive timely confirmation of their new membership or renewal. Usually, this is because payment is processed later than a member submits their membership form. In other cases, ARLIS/NA HQ has indicated that some member profiles have outdated emails, or addresses that have been incorrectly transcribed from hand-written forms. The Membership Committee attempted to assist with this issue by encouraging members (via ARLIS-L) to update their member profiles in MemberClicks at the start of the renewals process.

In the future, the service to members during the renewal process needs to improve. Every effort should be made to ensure that confirmations are sent in a timely manner and email bounce-backs are monitored, so that members can be contacted for updated information, if needed. The Membership Committee will be happy to work with the new management company to implement better procedures for responding to member inquiries.

**IV. Review of 2008-2009 Goals**

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

**Objective C. Craft and administer effective recruitment and retention strategies to attract and maintain new members.**

**Actions:**

- Revise membership brochure.  
  *Pending. The committee is hopeful that the new management company can provide assistance with the re-design of the brochure and the translation of the text, as requested by Canadian members.*

- Contact new members.  
  *Done. New members receive Welcome packets via MemberClicks. The committee also conducted a targeted email campaign to 2008 new members to encourage them to renew.*

- Contact non-renewals.
Done. In December 2008, the committee contacted 2007 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/07). In March 2009, the committee sent an email reminder to 2008 non-renewals (memberships expired on 12/31/08).

- Contact members without email addresses in their online profiles.
Not done. Additional online research or phone contact needed to update information for each member.

Objective D. Provide proactive outreach to library schools to diversify our membership and the profession.

Actions:
- Improve marketing of benefits
Pending. The group developed project plans to create a "media kit," which will include a standardized PowerPoint introducing ARLIS/NA and listing member benefits, as well as a PDF version of the revised membership brochure. This outreach package can be distributed to chapters, or used by individual committee members for local outreach to library schools. This project is dependent on the completion of the revised membership brochure (see above).

- Work with local ARLIS/NA chapters.
Pending. The committee determined geographic assignments among members to establish a structure whereby individual members will serve as liaisons to chapters for outreach. The committee also planned to distribute a "media kit" (see above) to chapter chairs, who would be encouraged to adapt the package for presentation at local library schools. These initiatives are dependent on the revision of the membership brochure (see above).

- Identify which GSLIS programs currently have courses in art/visual resources librarianship and/or have a student interest group for art/visual resources enthusiasts.
Pending. Last year, committee members researched GSLIS programs and contacts. Need to send updated marketing materials, including revised membership brochure and "media kit" (both pending).

- Contact GSLIS programs and request that they include links to the ARLIS/NA website and local chapter site on their web sites.
Partially complete – needs follow up. Last year, committee members contacted GSLIS programs and received positive responses. Need to follow up to check web sites and confirm that links were added.

- Pursue outreach to other graduate programs, such as art history or studio art, to introduce art librarianship as an alternative career path.
Pending. Need to complete revision of membership brochure and conduct research to identify appropriate programs and contacts.

- Begin discussion with Development and Travel Awards Committees to pursue funding to encourage membership growth, and to identify additional funding sources for new members.
Pending. Preliminary discussions with chair of Development Committee, but needs to be pursued more.

- Work with ArLiSNAP and the Diversity Committee to promote membership, help foster membership retention, and provide leadership training for the Society.
Perennial, need to do more.
Goal IV: To strengthen and increase the effectiveness of ARLIS/NA’s activities and operations.

Objective A. Conduct regular assessment of ARLIS/NA’s programs to inform future strategic planning.

Action:

- Investigate the feasibility of a comments/suggestions page on the website which would be monitored regularly or other options for members to offer feedback to the Society. Pending.

Objective B. Provide an efficient and effective organizational and financial structure to ensure the stability and health of the Society.

Actions:

- Assist Board with rollout of new membership fees. Done. Reviewed President’s letter about dues increase and posted additional messages to ARLIS-L.

- Communicate the activities of the Committee to the members of ARLIS/NA in an effort to increase transparency and promote a better understanding of the operations of the Society. Actively pursued. Committee communicated regularly with membership via ARLIS-L. Efforts need to be increased.

Objective C. Enhance the ARLIS/NA website by populating it with relevant content to create the premiere website for art library professionals.

Actions:

- Provide input into the development and maintenance of MemberClicks, or other online directory. Investigate how the committee can take advantage of the software. Actively pursued. The committee exploited the chair’s Board-level access to MemberClicks to develop mailing lists for targeted renewals outreach. This access also allows the committee to generate membership reports to track renewals and monitor new memberships for outreach.

- Continue “What our members are saying...” section of website. Actively pursued.

- Create ARLIS/NA-hosted Membership Committee website to make available information and resources relevant to the committee. Done, but needs to be developed more. Committee would like to provide members with access to standardized marketing materials, which can be used for informational or recruitment purposes. In addition to the new member Welcome packet materials, the committee would also like to post the revised membership brochure and “media kit.”

V. Executive Board issues
The focus of the committee’s activities this year was outreach for renewals, especially after the conclusion of the voting period for the increased dues. Indeed, the membership’s response to the revised membership dues suggests that the Board needs to institute a more regular timeline for future increases to the fees. More to the point, the dues vote truncated the amount of time that the committee had to focus on its outreach efforts. This effectively sidelined other projects, such as the revision of the membership brochure, on which other goals were dependent.

The committee hopes that the transition to the new management company will alleviate some of the difficulties encountered during the 2008-2009 renewals cycle. In particular, the Membership Committee would like to work with the management company to address the following issues in 2009-2010:

- **Online directory**: Will MemberClicks be retained or will a new system be implemented? If the latter, the Membership Committee would like to participate in the transition to the new system, so that it can effectively communicate the similarities/differences to the membership. Also, the committee would like to make recommendations for how to configure the system, e.g. it would be helpful to send new members their Welcome packet automatically, rather than the committee chair manually sending them (discussed above).

- **Member profile data**: Since email merge is the primary method of contacting members, profiles that lack current addresses or have flawed information due to data entry from hand-written forms pose a potential renewal risk. Will there be a process to review member data for accuracy or monitor email bounce-backs to identify candidates for potential follow-up?

- **Member inquiries**: As noted above, committee members regularly forward member inquiries to ARLIS/NA HQ, but are frustrated with the level of service provided. Service to members, in terms of response time and timeliness of payment processing, needs to be improved.

- **Workflow for renewal process**: The 2010 renewals cycle can be improved with a more definitive schedule and workflow for updates to the website and communications to members. The Membership Committee would like to work with the management company to clarify expectations and duties throughout the process.

- **Reporting**: In the past, the Membership Committee received regular reports from ARLIS/NA HQ, which was useful for tracking membership numbers during the renewals process. This year, the committee chair has had to rely on a report requested in June 2008 and has been exporting reports directly from MemberClicks. This process is time-consuming and does not provide the Society with standardized statistics that can be archived for future analysis or benchmarking.

- **Membership brochure**: Revising the membership brochure has been a goal of the committee for some time now. But, lack of support to identify a vendor to redesign the existing template has hindered progress. Also, Canadian members would like to see the brochure text translated into French and Spanish, which will require an additional vendor. The committee would like to request assistance from the new management company to identify appropriate vendors, and also coordinate these efforts with any initiatives to re-design communications from other committees, so as maintain consistent branding and a unified look for ARLIS/NA materials.