Summary of the Society’s Year

This report covers my term as President of ARLIS/NA, a period of thirteen months that began April 1, 2012, and will continue through April 29, 2013. While the year was not without challenges, I can report that the Society remains vibrant, with a strong and balanced core of long-time and newer members, a healthy financial situation, and a strongly committed core group of leaders, including a collegial and effective Executive Board that has done an excellent job in its stewardship duties. The hard work and commitment of the board members, committee chairs, special appointees, and many others working on behalf of our professional society as it enters its 41st year of existence, is what insures that the Society meets its mission and remains a vibrant and indispensable support group for art information specialists. My year overseeing the diverse activities of the organization and coming into contact with so many of our dedicated members has served to strengthen my long-held confidence that ARLIS/NA will remain a highly effective and sustainable organization for many years to come.

The Strategic Plan that was formally adopted in 2011 continues to guide our actions, and I am pleased to report that progress was made on the goals articulated in the plan. The efforts of the board to embed the Strategic Plan at all levels of the organization has been effective, as documented in the annual reports of our committees, divisions, chapters, and liaisons. The 2013 Conference Program has also been aligned with goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

At the beginning of my term I expressed my primary goal to make ARLIS/NA a more outward facing organization. The need to move beyond past perceptions of what constitutes “art librarianship” is expressed throughout the Strategic Plan. I believe progress has been made on that front in numerous ways, including the following:

- A high number of new and student members have joined the Society, as a result of targeted outreach and attractive financial incentives. More than 100 registrants of this year’s conference have indicated they will be attending their first conference.

- Three new Special Interest Groups (SIGs) were established: Digital Humanities, Provenance, and Supporting Creativity in Practice.

- Art Documentation has a new face and a broader audience as a result of the 2012 agreement with University of Chicago as publisher. Three issues have been published under the new partnership, and royalty payments have exceeded expectations.

- ARLIS/NA became an institutional member of the University of Maryland’s Center for Intellectual Property (CIP).

- Communication beyond our immediate membership and listserv has been improved. A list of press contacts, affiliate listservs, and affinity groups has been added to Wiggio, the Board’s
file-sharing platform, to be used for publicity and to distribute Official communications including statements of position on public policies.

- A contract with Interactive Media for new design features and migration to CMS Joomla content management system platform was approved by the Executive Board. The new designs will adapt our website to mobile and social networks and allow us to better distribute maintenance tasks.

- The Taskforce for Virtual Meetings produced a report recommending a program to offer virtual meetings to our membership as early as 2014.

- The 2013 Annual Conference will be the most international to date, with attendees from more than 18 countries. Grant applications to the Getty and Kress foundations were successful, resulting in $86,000 to support travel of 25 international attendees to Pasadena.

- ARLIS/NA hosted the first U.S. Study Tour for a group of 11 art librarians from Germany. While the International Relations Committee has organized four Study Tours abroad for our own members, this was the first time we hosted a group coming to the U.S. The group visited libraries, archives, and museums in New York, New Haven, and Washington DC.

- The International Relations Committee organized a successful Study Tour to Scandinavia that included participation in the IFLA Arts Section preconference in Helsinki.

- The International Relations Committee has organized a Study Tour to Russia that will allow 12 members to visit libraries and archives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

- I have actively sought to strengthen relationships with our Affiliate organizations. I wrote to all the presidents of our affiliates, inviting them to pursue closer communications, develop reciprocal benefits, and attend the conference as a special guest (the bylaws offer complimentary registration to affiliate presidents or a delegate). As a result, the ARLIS website was updated with current contacts and urls, and the president or a delegate from ARLIS UK/Ireland, ARLIS/Norden, ARLIS/Netherlands, SAA, and maybe JADS will be in Pasadena.

- With great assistance from Past President Jon Evans, our society continued along the pathway of cooperation between ARLIS/NA and VRA. An Agreement for Future Joint Conferences was signed, setting a precedent for effective and sustainable collaboration. The Joint Conference Financial Agreement led to the formation of a Joint Conference Task Force with representation from both organizations to analyze past joint conference reports, highlight problem areas, define roles and expectations, and propose a protocol for joint conference planning (with the exceptions of financial issues). The task force, chaired by Ann Whiteside, has been appointed and will submit its report by the end of the year.

- In another ARLIS/NA and VRA joint venture, the popular Summer Education Institute was held with great success in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and plans for another SEI in 2014 are underway.

- I attended the annual board meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians in Chicago, where I made a presentation of issues facing ARLIS/NA. The two organizations agree we share similar challenges and strengths that would benefit from closer communication. I met with the Executive Director and Development Director of the Museum Computer Network in New York to exchange information about management and board organization. Nancy Beaumont, Executive Director of Society of American Archivists, and I had a phone discussion on ways to expand reciprocal benefits.
• Via the Public Policy Committee, ARLIS/NA issued numerous public statements on issues of importance to our profession, and distributed them beyond our own listserv.

Improvements to communication to and between ARLIS/NA members are also taking place. Video messages and e-blasts are used more frequently, and they drive traffic to the ARLIS website. Transparency is a key goal, and to this effect, an increasing number of internal reports are posted to the AWS, on both public and members’ sides. Basecamp and GoToMeeting licenses have been acquired and are now available to Society leaders.

Cultivating new members and increasing diversity within our ranks remains an important goal. Several developments this year will strengthen our programs in this area:

• A growing number of webinars and chats offer educational opportunities beyond the annual conference.
• A Virtual Mentoring Program was launched in 2012. Like the popular yearlong career mentoring program, the virtual mentoring program pairs ARLIS/NA members as mentors and mentees, but instead of meeting at the national conference, all training and communication is conducted online.
• Two awards will honor beloved members who passed away in 2012. The ARLIS/NA Internship Award has been renamed The Wolfgang Freitag Internship Award and the Karno Travel Award is now the Howard Karno Travel Award. Both will be presented at this year’s conference in Pasadena.

Conference Planning

This year’s conference will take place in less than four weeks. The Conference Planning Committee, together with the four local co-chairs and a strong team of local volunteers, has done an excellent job of organizing what promises to be a highly successful event on all fronts: programming, special events, registration, and net profit. A record amount of sponsorship has been secured, thanks to effective work by the chair of the Development Committee, together with the local development officer and proactive cultivation by the president and other members of the Executive Board. The tally thus far shows $67,550 in cash donations, $91,750 in travel and publication awards and grants, $8,660 in chapter-sponsored travel awards, and more than $10,000 of in-kind contributions. We are on a path to exceed our estimated profit of $82,000, which will be a substantial improvement over last year’s net of $37,876 and will be very helpful in shoring up profit in the overall budget for 2013.

Future conference venues: I signed a contract for the Grand Hyatt as the official conference hotel for Washington, DC, in May 2014. The Executive Board solicited and received three proposals for future conferences in 2015 and 2016. Texas (either Ft. Worth or Austin) was approved as the site in 2015; the board is now considering offers from two cities to host the 2016 conference.

Membership

243 Institutional, Business Affiliate, and Overseas Memberships were removed from the books as part of our agreement with the University of Chicago Press for publication of Art Documentation. This was largely because the institutional members joined only to receive Art Doc for library collections. The new arrangement allows us to focus our efforts on the individuals who collectively make up ARLIS/NA. A number of individuals associated with institutional memberships subsequently joined as Individual members.

The good news is that in 2012 all other memberships combined increased 5.8% from 2011 levels. We have a high percentage of student members, which is promising for the future, provided that
most of them can find employment in fields related to art librarianship. The Membership Committee has produced some innovative ideas for recruitment and retention that should be followed up on. Without a strong base of members, the society will cease to flourish, so recruitment and retention efforts should always be a high priority.

**Budget and Development**

As expected, the 2012 budget closed with a deficit, albeit one smaller than estimated, thanks to positive investment proceeds. The deficit was expected due to the loss of 243 institutional members that were transferred to the University of Chicago as part of the publishing agreement. Audit fees and legal fees for TEI contract renewal were higher than expected. Net profits should return this year and into the foreseeable future. Over the long term, the loss of institutional members will be offset by incrementally growing royalties and the elimination of billable hours for in-house journal production by our management company. Next year our budget projects a profit of $28,573, but a higher profit is likely to result through higher than estimated conference income. In my opinion, the Society continues to depend too heavily on conference profits to sustain its programs. Therefore, new income flows should be pursued by the Board, such as continuing education services, premier tours, website advertising, merchandise sales, and other ideas.

Development efforts remain important to build and sustain the level of services our members have come to expect. This year saw the resignation of the Development Committee chair, which could have been extremely detrimental to the fiscal state of ARLIS/NA, had not Kathryn Wayne, a former ARLIS/NA President, stepped in quickly as interim chair. It is thanks to her efforts that the conference has achieved a record amount of sponsorships. She also made structural improvements to the organization of the Development Committee to increase its effectiveness.

Society Circle, the society’s premier membership support vehicle, was given much deserved attention this year, with numerous improvements to its administration. Members are being cultivated more actively, with personalized letters from the president going to every member. Pins to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Society Circle and to welcome the expanding membership will be given to each member, beginning at the conference in Pasadena. Website updates to make donating easier were implemented but need further improvement once the new web platform is ready.

I attended a workshop on Fundraising for Non-Profit Organizations at the Foundation Center in New York on November 13. I also investigated training services of BoardSource for fundraising skills but found them too expensive.

**Management Services**

Technical Enterprises Inc. (TEI) continues to provide general management support services to ARLIS/NA, including website hosting, membership services, board meeting support, conference management, advertising and sponsorship sales, and other media services. Despite the abrupt resignation of Chris Roper, the Society and Association Manager, on the eve of the Toronto conference, basic services stayed mostly on course, and a new contract for one year was signed in May. Legal fees associated with new terms that were warranted in a new contract contributed to the 2012 budget deficit. The year with TEI continued to be one of ups and downs. After an extended search with several candidates rejected by ARLIS/NA, Guadalupe Rodriguez, was hired as the new Association and Conference Manager in June 2012. Despite a satisfactory performance and a good relationship between the Board and Ms. Rodriguez, she resigned in February 2013. After each of the two resignations, senior TEI staff stepped in to meet contractual demands, but it also required direct intervention by the president to keep services going properly. Dealing with the staffing situation at TEI has taken time that might have been better utilized by the president on other priorities. Yet another new manager, Robert Kopchinski, has been hired as of April 1, and we
all hope he will develop the skills and dedication that are required for the position. In February a two-month review of TEI’s services was initiated, resulting in a report issued in March. The report, which identified a number of areas where improvement is needed, will be the basis of a discussion between the president, vice-president, and TEI senior staff in April, one month prior to the expiration of the current contract.

**Highlighted Activities as President**

- Oversaw Nominating Committee’s selection of a new slate of Executive Board members
- When incoming Education Liaison John Taormina resigned in February, I worked quickly to find an excellent replacement, and to our great fortune, Sarah Falls graciously stepped up to accept the Board’s unanimous appointment. As the author of a recent report to the Board and a recent stint as the chair of our largest chapter, ARLIS/NY, Sarah brings a level of expertise and experience that makes her particularly well-suited to join the Board at this time.
- Negotiated a new one year contract with TEI for management services that resulted in lower monthly fees, added responsibilities for TEI, and further protections for ARLIS/NA
- Chaired post-conference board meeting in Toronto
- Chaired eleven conference calls of the Executive Board
- Organized and chaired two-day Midyear Executive Board meeting in September at The Frick in New York
- Chaired CPAC meeting in July in Pasadena
- Participated in weekly calls of Pasadena co-chairs
- Participated in conference calls of Strategic Planning Committee
- Communicated regularly with many society leaders and members
- Created agenda for pre-conference Executive Board meetings in Pasadena
- Conducted frequent calls and daily emails with TEI staff to discuss management issues
- Issued regular communications with membership, including a video message, news items on AWS, postings to ARLIS-L, and e-blasts to our members, supporters, and affiliates
- Holiday greetings and requests for end of year donations
- Wrote cover letters for Exhibits and Sponsors prospectus, Pasadena Website, and Conference Printed Program
- Secured $89,600 in new funds that support travel to the 2013 ARLIS/NA Annual conference
- Raised $19,700 from new and repeat donors in 2013 conference support
- Sent 35 handwritten letters thanking individuals involved in the successful 2012 SEI conference in Ann Arbor
- Sent more than 60 personal letters to Society Circle members
- Participated in a successful IRC Study Tour to Scandinavia
- Represented ARLIS/NA at the IFLA Art Libraries Section Meeting and at a reception for library society presidents hosted by the minister of culture in Helsinki, Finland
- Registered to attend the upcoming IRC Study Tour to Russia
- In recognition of my work on behalf of ARLIS/NA to increase international cooperation between art librarians, I have been selected to receive the 2013 John Jacob Astor Award in Library Studies and Information Science from the Berlin-based Checkpoint Charlie Foundation. I will travel to Berlin in June to host a symposium on German and U.S. collaborations in art librarianship, where several ARLIS/NA members will present papers (including the recipient of the 2013 ARLIS/NA Kress Travel Award)

**Goals for next year as Past President**

I look forward with pleasure to assuming my duties as Past President within a few weeks, with special focus on the Diversity and the International Relations Committees. Due to other priorities that arose during my year as president, I was not able to institute a program to recognize Movers and Shakers within ARLIS/NA. I intend to make progress on this goal by assisting in the
development of a regular newsletter or e-blast that will feature innovations and accomplishments by our members. The recruitment and retention of members should remain a prime focus—it may be time to conduct a satisfaction survey to know where we excel and where we could improve. I also intend to continue developing a plan for enhanced publicity and promotion of the society.

In closing, the future outlook for ARLIS/NA is very positive. I wish to thank the ARLIS/N Executive Board for its outstanding teamwork and amazing collective energy. The experience of working with such a fine group of colleagues has been tremendously rewarding to me. I look greatly forward to my final year of board service in the position of Past President, working on behalf of the society, and supporting the new initiatives and strong leadership of our incoming president Gregory P.J. Most.

Respectfully submitted by Deborah Kempe
President, ARLIS/NA
March 31, 2013