

## **ARLIS/NA Annual Conference Denver, CO, May 1-5, 2008**

As you may or may not know, I am a long-time member of ARLIS/NA and the Northwest Chapter. This was my last year on the ARLIS/NA Executive Board as the Canadian Representative and the Chair, ARLIS/NA Canada Chapter. My official responsibilities at the Denver conference included participating in the day-long pre-conference ARLIS/NA Executive Board meeting; introducing the incoming Canadian Member-at-large, Liv Valmestad, at the Leadership Breakfast; and attending the Membership Meeting (AGM) and Development Committee Meeting, as well as chairing the ARLIS/NA Canada Chapter Meeting and presenting the Melva J. Dwyer Award at Convocation as Chair of that committee. I contributed four Canadian art publications to the Silent Auction. I feel a greater connection than ever to the people and benefits associated with ARLIS/NA as my tenure as the Canadian Representative comes to a close. In addition, I have a deeper respect for the efforts of all ARLIS/NA board and committee members to make the Society more relevant to each and every ARLIS/NA member – to add to the deeper respect for the work of ARLIS/NA conference planners that I obtained by participating in the planning of the Banff 2006 ARLIS/NA Annual Conference! Participation in the Society is rewarding; I highly recommend getting involved at all levels. I wish to thank everyone who assisted me directly and indirectly in the past four years as conference planner and Canadian Representative. I thrive on my interactions with all of you, finding that I pick up the most useful tips when I don't expect it. Thank you to the Northwest Chapter for awarding me the Travel Award to assist financially with attending the Denver conference.

Each year I look forward to attending the ARLIS/NA annual conference and each year I come away from the conference inspired and refreshed – although not necessarily well-rested.

Here are some of the highlights of this year's Denver conference through my eyes.

I felt at home in Denver as it has many similarities to Calgary: it is situated east of the Rocky Mountains on the plains with a strong oil and gas industry; has rapidly changing, unpredictable weather complete with Chinooks (warm winds); and has a strong cowboy culture, evident in the sculptures I saw on Thursday afternoon as I was oriented to the city while on the Public Art Walking Tour. At the end of the conference, I joined the Boulder, Colorado tour which featured architect I.M. Pei's NCAR (National Centre for Atmospheric Research) building, the University of Colorado Library's Rare Book Collection, and the Colorado Chautauqua historic site with lunch in downtown Boulder, a city much larger than Banff but with a similar downtown flavour, that is, a pedestrian-friendly, trendy "village" with high-end shopping, restaurants, candy shops, flowers on the boulevards, and such. Traveling to different cities and experiencing art works, architecture, art museums and art/architecture/VR libraries first-hand is definitely one of the joys of conference attendance for me.

This year's conference featured four extremely engaging and witty nationally-known speakers. Dr. Patricia Limerick, Faculty Directory and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West at the University of Colorado spoke at Convocation on how the history of the American West is integral to the current culture in Colorado. Lawrence Argent, Professor of Sculpture at the University of Denver presented the opening plenary session on his sculpture "I See What You Mean", a sculpture of a large (two-storey high) blue bear peering into the Denver Convention Center. Dr. Lorie Roy, current President of the American Library Association (and member of the White Earth Reservation of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe as well as a faculty member of the University of Texas School of Information) addressed the attendees at the Membership Meeting on the topic of library associations. Dr. David Silver, Assistant Professor of Media Studies and Director of the Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies at the University of San Francisco told us about The September Project at the closing plenary session – a project addressing four contemporary literacies: literacy, e-literacy, me-literacy and we-literacy. In addition, Pat Wagner of Pattern Research Inc presented at the Leadership Breakfast; her motto is: "We must free ourselves of the hope that the sea will ever rest. We must learn to sail in high winds. ~Leif Smith."

Some of the excellent sessions I attended at the conference were: Visual Pedagogy: Do You See What I See; Scholarly Publication and the Art/Architecture/VR Library (particularly interested in the SAH AVRN projects – Society of Architectural Historians Architecture Visual Resource Network which is working towards a collaborative program to share architectural images among academics for teaching and research at no cost); Digital Asset Management in Transition; Mile High Planning – New Directions in Urban Renewal and Sustainability Planning (I was the session recorder for this very entertaining session – yes, these speakers presented the topic with humorous words and images!); Using Numbers and Stories for Advocacy (using numbers to convey stories, to correct misconceptions, and as an educational opportunity); and Bye-Bye B.I.: Innovative Approaches to Library Instruction (focus on problem-based learning and students exploring research tools to answer a question with space and facilitation provided by library - rather than librarian lecturing to them at the front of the room on the literature search process and databases/resources). In addition, I attended the Collection Development Discussion Group meeting (topics included: storage/high density libraries, approval plans), the Academic Library Division meeting, the Architecture Section Meeting ("SLAM", a new idea with members giving brief presentations on their projects/research/activities, was successful), and the Teaching Librarians Discussion Group meeting, as well as the Oxford Art Online (new interface for Grove Art Online) and ARTstor (future directions: platform for academics to contribute to the SAH AVRN) User

Group meetings. For further information, have a look at the conference proceedings that will be posted on the web shortly.

Thank you once again.

Respectfully submitted,

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and

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