

Why Should I Belong to AzLA and ALA?

When I ask my colleagues if they belong to AzLA or ALA, I most often hear, “I did belong at one time, but I don’t really see the benefit if I am not going to go to conference,” or “I just don’t have money/time/interest.” Speaking as the AzLA Chapter Council representative to ALA, I urge you to reconsider.

Why should you belong to AzLA and/or ALA? You should join because you are part of a tribe. Yours is a passionate people who care strongly about literacy, libraries and lifespan learning. You want to ensure equitable access to information to promote democracy and intellectual freedom. You should join because there is strength in numbers. Politicians can easily say no to individuals; it is harder to say no to well-organized groups of passionate people with passionate supporters. You should join to support the next generation of librarians who will continue the amazing work that you are doing now.

What do AzLA and ALA offer you? As those of you who have been longtime members know, first and foremost you make great friends, both in your state and around the country, who are invaluable resources to you in growing your career or working on programs – never underestimate the power of the tribal network.

Through the organization you have the support of lobbyists at both the state and national level who work continually on issues relevant to libraries. You also have the opportunity to attend conferences and learn from individuals both inside and out of our profession, individuals who are making a difference.

Can AzLA and ALA change your life? Well, that is difficult to say because it is largely up to you. As for me, every time I attend a conference, read an article, participate in a council discussion or enjoy Library Pint Night, I learn new things. I learn about myself and others in this amazing tribe. I learn about new technologies and new ways of thinking. I learn that libraries are making a difference in large and small ways and I learn that I love being a part of all that libraries offer to our citizenry.

If you already belong to our supporting organizations, I challenge you to sponsor a friend to join. If you can’t sponsor someone, invite them to participate. And, don’t just join: participate! Add your voice to those of other librarians. Explore, attend and inspire others with all that you have to offer.

Stay in the Know!

In an effort to communicate information from ALA to the chapter I have created the blog –

<http://azlacouncilornotes.blogspot.com/> .

In addition – please “Like” the AzLA Intellectual Freedom News page on Facebook, which is updated by AzLA’s Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Amber Mathewson

AzLA Chapter Councilor