



AT THE LIBRARY

By Julie Winkelstein
June 29, 2007

***“We need to bring
habeas corpus back to
the American justice
system.”***

-Anthony Romero,
Director of the American
Civil Liberties Union, at
the American Library
Association (ALA) con-
ference in Washington,
D.C.

Last week I went to Washington D.C. for the annual ALA conference. This gigantic event was spread out over several days and many hotels, with a shuttle bus connecting all of them. I thought I preferred the Public Library Association (PLA) conference since I am, after all, a public librarian. But the range of offerings and the keynote speakers made me reconsider this. I realized I like to see the mix of librarians roaming the halls, crowding the sidewalks and filling the meeting rooms. It is fascinating to see law librarians, museum librarians, public librarians, school librarians, university librarians and the other kinds of librarians that are categorized as academic, special, school or public.

The first night I attended the world premiere of a movie that has been eight years in the making. This 95 minutes documentary is called *The Hollywood Librarian*, and it gives a glimpse not only into the movie industry's perception of librarians, but also the real working lives

of different types of librarians. It includes interviews and movie clips and there was much laughter and even a few tears as we all recognized the many times inaccurate portrayals of ourselves. The scene in *It's a Wonderful Life* when George Bailey discovers his wife has become a spinster librarian was familiar to most of us, as was Marian the librarian in *The Music Man*. But there were others, like the young attractive librarian in *The Station Agent*, and a gentle Richard Benjamin in *Goodbye Columbus* that gave other views of our profession. It is a powerful movie that particularly stresses the importance of librarians in our democratic society and I think all of us were glad it was made.

One presentation I particularly enjoyed was called "Walking Hand in Hand: Librarianship and Social Movements Today." This program was co-sponsored by the American Indian Association, the Asian Pacific American Lib-

continued on page 2

rarians Association, the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Roundtable and REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking.

A panel of speakers from these organizations talked about the importance of working together, since members of every single one of them have felt the pain of discrimination and intolerance. One speaker, Cynthia Crespin from New Mexico, told us about the concept of oneness that she was taught as a young child. “No matter who you are, what you look like, where you come from,” she told us, “inside is always one.”

The first keynote speaker, past senator and presidential candidate Bill Bradley, expressed this same thought later the same day. In his speech, he

talked about the connectedness of all people. He described seeing the NASA photograph of the world and how it continues to remind him that we are “all world citizens, not just citizens of our local communities. If you think about it, we’re more alike than different.” He ended by exhorting us to be a good citizen and stay informed.

“Stay informed,” he continued, “and then vote.” His speech was humorous, serious and sincere, and although it may be a speech he has given more than once, I enjoyed it. I appreciated, too, his approach to librarians as an audience. He didn’t share his childhood memories of the local librarian or tell us how much he’s always loved books, as if that were the full extent of what there is to know about every librarian in the room. Instead, he treated us like the intelligent professional people we are. Thank you, Mr. Bradley – it was refreshing.