

Hotline / Connections

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

A Division of the American Library Association

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by David V. Loertscher

Literacy in the Road Ahead—Let's Not Blow It!

For those who say . . .

No need for a library book budget any more—it's all going computer

consider this:

Bill Gates says:

The paper-based book, magazine, or newspaper still has a lot of advantages over its digital counterpart. To read a digital document you need an information appliance such as a personal computer. A book is small, lightweight, high-resolution, and inexpensive compared to



the cost of a computer. For at least a decade, it won't be as convenient to read a long, sequential document on a com-

puter screen as on paper. (p.113) . . . Among all the types of paper documents, narrative fiction is one of the few that will not benefit from electronic organization. (Bill Gates. *The Road Ahead*. Viking, 1995. p.118)

A great thing about the transitional information society is we can use the best of all technologies to create a literate nation. Let's not blow it!

Major Association Study Underway

AASL is currently undergoing a restructuring effort that will help the Association to design services and programs to help AASL achieve the division's new mission:

"to advocate excellence, facilitate change, and develop leaders in the school library media field."

This mission was developed at a leadership retreat held prior to the 1995 ALA Annual Conference. Following that retreat, AASL President David Loertscher appointed four task forces to examine various components of the restructuring process. They are Communications, Survey of the Field, Governance and Continuing Education.

This restructuring effort has included many opportunities for input from leadership and members, such as meetings and focus groups at the 1996 ALA Midwinter Meeting and an upcoming study of programs, services and communications. In the articles that follow, Frances Bradburn, chair of the Communications Restructuring Task Force, and Marjorie Pappas, chair of the Survey of the Field Restructuring Task Force, explain the reasons and process for this study.

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