

REFORMA DE FLORIDA

Noticias del mes/News of the month

Notes from the Editor

July's hot, humid, and rainy weather is upon us, with many more similar months to come until the coolness of fall breaks this trend. So, stay cool by relaxing with our latest issue.

The June ALA conference in Philadelphia was a huge success, showcasing our members at various events.

REFORMA National had many activities for members. In addition, the winners of the Librarian of the Year (LOTY) and the Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement (LAA) awards were announced.

Read on to see what your REFORMA de Florida members did at ALA, in words and pictures.

Make sure to renew your membership so you can stay involved in the many exciting events happening locally as well as nationally.

Finally, the REFORMA National Conference is coming up in September. Check out page 9, and register.

Alma Ramos-McDermott,
Editor

2025 Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award



Every year REFORMA National announces the winners of two major awards at the REFORMA Membership Meetings at ALA. Madeline Peña, Awards Chair, announced the award winners on the last day of the conference. The Dr. Arnulfo D. Trejo Librarian of the Year (LOTY) award winner for 2025 is REFORMA National PR chair Celia Avila de Santiago, from the Los Angeles chapter.

The second award Madeline announced was the Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award. According to REFORMA's website, *"The Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award (LAA) recognizes those who have achieved excellence in librarianship over an extended (over 20 years) period of service and who have made significant and lasting contributions to REFORMA, as well as to the Latino/x/é and the Spanish-speaking communities."*

This year the Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award was given to two long-time REFORMA members: Manuel "Manny" Figueroa from the Northeast chapter, and REFORMA de Florida's own Vice-President/President-Elect, Alma Ramos-McDermott.

Both winners retired this year. Manny served 31 years at the N.Y. and Queens Public Libraries in various supervisory

Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award (continued)

positions, while Alma served 40 years as a School Librarian and Teacher in Brooklyn N.Y., Boston MA, as well as Immokalee and Naples FL.

Alma thanked her well-wishers on REFORMAnet with these words:

When I found out via email that I was a recipient of the REFORMA National 2025 Elizabeth Martinez Lifetime Achievement Award, I cried. When it was announced at ALA, I cried again. I cry with gratitude and thanksgiving because it is truly humbling to now be in the footsteps of REFORMA giants that have gone before me.

Thank you to the Awards Committee for acknowledging the work I've done as a School Librarian and Teacher for Latino students from prek-12th grade in Brooklyn, Boston, and FL for the past 40 years. Receiving the gift of this news was a marvelous way to kick off my retirement!

I look forward to celebrating with Manny and my fellow REFORMistas at our upcoming conference. Gracias, gracias, gracias!!

Alicia Long, ReDeFL 2021 President, noted her appreciation by stating: "REFORMA de Florida members are so proud of you, Alma! We look forward to many more years of working together for library services to Latinos in our State, the nation, and everywhere! Felicitaciones de todo corazón."

REFORMA de Florida members at ALA: In words and pictures

by Alma Ramos-McDermott



Some REFORMA de Florida members were at the recent ALA conference in Philadelphia. Here's a breakdown of the conference in words and pictures.

Thursday June 26: The ReDeFL Board planned to have a get-together for our members at ALA. Instead the get-together turned into our chapter organizing the yearly REFORMixer for National.

Usually held the first day of the conference, the REFORMA Mixer is a fun time for members and prospective members attending ALA to meet and greet fellow REFORMistas. President Lucia Gonzalez's great memory of past locales gave us a few options to call so, after the EC approved a date and time, Past-President Maria Vega called those locales and Mixto Restaurant agreed to host us. I went to Mixto a day early to sample the wares and chat with the manager to make sure everything was set for Friday's event.

ReDeFL at ALA (continued)

Friday June 27: In the early afternoon, I represented ReDeFL at the Board of Directors meeting.



Later that afternoon I attended a CAYASC (Children and Young Adult Services Committee) meeting to discuss the different jobs we would need to cover to make sure Sunday's Pura Belpré Awards Ceremony went off without a hitch.



I finally had a free 20 minutes, so stopped by the Spanish Publishers booth in the Exhibit Hall where Lucia was working for the entire conference.

The evening's REFORMixer went very well, with over 35 members showing up to mix and mingle for the 2-hour event.



After the mixer a group of about 20 of us took several Ubers over to Fat Moon, a nearby Asian restaurant, and proceeded to sing the night away at Karaoke. Oldies, newbies, and LOTS of Latino songs were belted out to the appreciative audience of REFORMistas. Occasional bystanders wandered in and seemed to be wondering what happened to whatever staid music they normally listened to on a Friday night. LOL.



ReDeFL at ALA (continued)



Saturday June 28: After a late night of karaoke, a tired group of REFORMistas (including a very sleepy me) made it to the All-Committees meeting at 8 a.m. There, those of us who are committee chairs discussed what our committees do with prospective members and sought input on various projects. I'm Chair of the Book Review Committee for CAYASC, so if you're interested in joining my committee please **email me.**

Later that afternoon, we scrambled to find seats in the main auditorium to hear George Takei (of Star Trek fame). He even shared some sentences in very fluent Spanish! Later, former Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden was interviewed by author Kwame Alexander. Several times, she brought the audience to its feet in appreciation for all she's done and what she means to us.



ReDeFL at ALA (continued)



Alex's Presidential Program rounded up my official REFORMA National slate of Saturday meetings. There, Nicanor Diaz, David Lopez, and Addy Huerta spoke about different program offerings either at their library or REFORMA programs they're involved in, such as Children in Crisis, and the Resistencia y Asistencia Resource List.

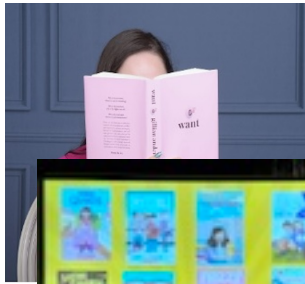
That night there were several publisher/vendor parties around town. Many of us decided to attend the Mango party. It was much more laid back than in previous years, but the food was good, the drinks were free, and the company was wonderful.



Sunday June 29: The annual Pura Belpré Celebration was held today. This is one of the only major book awards celebrations offered free to ALA members. No ticket is required, other than being a member of the conference. Maria Vega helped sell books, and I helped set out programs on the chairs, was the official greeter for authors, publishers, and guests, and took event photos. Audience members heard amazing, heartfelt speeches from the winners, and were entertained by a folkloric dance group. We ended with the traditional audience singalong of "*De Colores*."



ReDeFL at ALA (continued)



Monday June 30: Maria Vega, REFORMA Co-Chair, presented a program on the GNCRT collaboration with REFORMA to put out a



list of Latino graphic novels.

REFORMA's Membership meeting ended the conference. Normally it's very well attended, but this year many REFORMistas had to catch early planes back to the west coast or to exotic locales. By the time we took the official photo, there were only 8 of us left.

The last day of ALA is always a sad day, made more so by the fact that so many members left earlier than usual. However, the good news is we'll see each other again at the upcoming REFORMA National Conference in Long Beach, CA. Registration information is on page 9.



See you in September!

Photo credits for this article: Linda Caycedo, David Lopez, Jenny Lizarraga, Madeline Peña, Celia Avila, and Alma.



Dear Future Librarian

by Gaby Gomez

“Summer Semester? More Like Summer Stress-ter.”

Picture this: the sun is shining, your friends are posting beach pics with piña coladas, and you're... in your fourth Zoom session of the day, trying to decipher the difference between a primary source and a treatise. Welcome to the summer semester, MLIS edition.

While most people associate summer with vacations, pina coladas, and iced drinks, MLIS students know the truth: summer classes are intense. Like, “I-just-read-200-pages-in-48-hours” intense. Especially when you're taking Law Librarianship condensed into three weeks. Three. Weeks. That's not a class; that's a full-blown academic boot camp.

Some days I felt like I was in court myself, defending my citations in APA format while the ghost of Bluebook looms over my shoulder. Other days, I wondered if my brain was permanently shaped like a legal database interface.

Let's not forget the summer assignments that sneak up on you like mosquitoes. Just when you think, “Ah, I can relax this weekend,” your professor drops a research analysis that requires both critical thinking and, somehow, a trip to a law library that doesn't open past 5 pm.

And yet... there's something kind of magical about summer study. Maybe it's the quiet. Maybe it's the freedom to wear pajamas with zero judgment. Maybe it's that weird sense of pride in surviving what feels like an escape room of legal jargon and lightning-fast deadlines.

So if you're reading this while sipping cold coffee and wondering if you've made a huge mistake, breathe. You're not alone. Summer semester might be Stress-ter, but it's also a rite of passage. A short, sweaty, slightly unhinged sprint toward your librarian future.

Until next time, remember: you can cry and catalog.

P.S. I'm still looking for MLIS students to feature in upcoming columns! If you'd like to share your story, email me at gaby.gomez.26@outlook.com. Let's show the world how wonderfully chaotic and diverse our paths into librarianship can be.

With tecito de menta, and solidarity, Gaby



!Latineando!

by David Hernandez Rivero

Saludos a todos los reformistas de Florida.

Summer is a magical time of the year for everyone and is my favorite season. I always found it fascinating that two hemispheres alternate summer and winter. We all love great summer outings, activities, longer daylight hours, as well as the feeling of joy and energy.

Summer has profound symbolisms among numerous cultures: growth and abundance, or a time of spiritual recharging by renewal and transformation. Since time immemorial during the summer people gather to celebrate life in numerous forms such as religious festivals, sports tournaments, dancing, etc. In public libraries there is so much happening such as literacy events, magic shows, music, prizes, and much more. I love this year's theme "*Color our world.*" It reminds me of Reynaldo Arenas, one of Cuba's greatest 20th century writers, who once wrote "*summer is my favorite color.*"

For libraries summer is an excellent time to bring your best programs for all ages and display refreshing collections as well as art displays and decorations. Managers should encourage staff to show their creativity and think out of the box. Coloring our world as a summer theme brings innumerable possibilities for programming, events, and collections.

Some ideas I want to share today are:

- Arts and crafts programs for children where they can pick materials and colors. It can get messy for sure.
- For great Latino programs I recommend exploring the world of flora and fauna as well as Latin American festivals, traditional dresses, and masks.
- STEAM programs such as paleontology programs can be explored both by library staff and by hiring a local museum to do library presentations.
- Coding, drumming, or rock paintings are good ideas too.
- Salsa and Samba classes, Afro-Latino percussion classes, and folk dances will be appreciated by your Latino community.

Always remember how important it is to make your physical space special. It's your turn to do special decorations and create art displays. If you're lucky to have large spaces in your library, why not bring local artists or schools to exhibit their art? Staff can make beautiful art displays using Papel picado, bright fabrics and textiles, musical instruments such as Andean Quenas and Zampoña, and vibrant images from the rich Latin American cultural traditions.

Lastly, my main objective is to encourage reading in our communities, right? Some ideas for children include: *My Name is Celia* by Monica Brown, *Isle to Island* by Alexis Castellanos, and *Across the Bay* by Carlos Aponte. I strongly recommend biographies of famous Latino Personalities such as Roberto Clemente, Selena, Frida Kahlo, Sonia Sotomayor, and others.

Latineando (continued)

For adults, always encourage authors from the Latin American Boom (both in English and Spanish) such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, and Mario Vargas Llosa who passed away recently. Other recommendations in English are Ruben Reyes's *Archives of Unknown Universes*, *The Bewitching* by Silvia Moreno Garcia, *Mallinally* by Veronica Chapa, and *Fever Dreams of a Parasite* by Pedro Iniguez. En español: *Hombre Caído* de Fernando Aramburu, *Mi nombre es Emilia* de Isabel Allende y *Los Nombres de Feliza* de Juan Gabriel Vásquez.

Have a great Summer Library Program at your library!
Ashe

In the know

What's going on in Florida libraries? If it sounds interesting, learn about it. Stay "in the know." If you want to contribute to future columns of "In the Know," send an email and we'll make sure your event is featured in our next newsletter. Are YOU in the know?

The National REFORMA Conference VIII: September 18-21

Registration for the National REFORMA Conference VIII is still open. As announced on REFORMA's Facebook page María Hinojosa, Pulitzer Prize winning Journalist, Anchor, and Executive Producer of "Latino USA" will give the Opening Session Keynote address. She's amazing!

NRC VIII will be held September 18-21 in beautiful Long Beach California. Once you [register for the conference](#) you will receive a confirmation link with information on getting a room at the host hotel. We hope to see you there!



Are you a Corporate member of REFORMA de Florida?

Corporate members are an important part of our chapter. Send a photo, business card, or a short blurb about your company for a future newsletter. We want to know more about you!

What's happening in your region?: (Northern, Central, or Southern)

What's happening in your library or region related to our Latino community? Email your name, region, title, library name, a short summary of your news or event, and any photos. Your news can grow membership in your region, and for our chapter, so we look forward to hearing from you.

***Were you forwarded this newsletter but are not yet a member of
REFORMA de Florida?***

To join or renew, go to REFORMA National's [Membership page](#) and check REFORMA de Florida as your chapter.



***Is your membership getting ready to expire?
Are you a Member-at-large?***

Not sure if your membership is expiring? [Email](#) to learn your status.

If you're a REFORMA National **Member-at-large** (not associated with ReDeFL or any chapter), [email](#) for information on **how to join the Florida chapter** as a full member.