



- Go to the Conference 101 session on Saturday morning sponsored by New Members Round Table (NMRT). It's a wealth of information!
- Shoes
 - Wear comfortable shoes. Everyone loves pretty shoes, but foot health and back health is more important.
 - Never wear the same shoes two days in a row; something about that promotes blisters. Better to give your feet some variety.
- Food
 - Pack snacks (or buy some when you get there). You can get a lot of food/snacks at a Walgreens if you need to. Oatmeal, snack bars, cheese sticks, fruit, yogurt, etc.
 - First check to see if you have a fridge in your hotel room – if you do, you have a lot more options. As expensive as drug-store food shopping can be, having some of these for snacks can save money in the long run.
 - Plus, things are scheduled close together (in time) and far apart (in distance), so it's nice to have emergency snacks if you get hungry and want to avoid low-blood sugar **hangriness**. Hangry = hungry + angry.
- Prepare a Schedule
 - Use the Conference Scheduler to search for programs. It has a mobile app, too.
 - Prepare a schedule, but also have back-ups. Sometimes the actual program isn't what you expected. You've traveled a long way and invested your time and funding, it's okay to leave a program and find another.
- WiFi: The conference center has free Wi-Fi; ALA arranged for this.
- Transportation to Conference Center and Hotels
 - There are buses that run between key hotels and the conference center. A "block" in Las Vegas is a long way. Cutting through a hotel is like taking a shortcut through the Mall in Boise. So a 3-block walk in 100 degree heat may be made better with a bus ride.

Exhibits.

- Make time to go to them. Talk to the vendors. Ask about the books. Many have ARCs to give away (Advance Review Copies). Visit with YOUR vendors. Say hello & make friends face-to-face; it's amazing what it can do for customer service.
- In the exhibit hall:
 1. You don't have to take everything offered to you. Remember, everything you pick up, you have to (a) haul back to your hotel room and (b) get home via your luggage or some other means.

2. The Exhibit Hall has a post office. You can ship items home with library rate. They have boxes available.
 3. Still... you don't have to take everything that is offered to you. It's okay to say, "could you email that information to me later?"
 4. Just consider before taking it, "do you really want this? Will you really use it? Are you certain to throw it out once you unpack?"
- Authors are everywhere: exhibits, Auditorium speakers series, Pop Top Stage in the Exhibit Hall. Look at the schedules. After an author event in the Auditorium series, they will have books for sale and autographs. Carry a credit card!
 - It's okay to schedule free time. Stay in, splurge on a movie, get room service (or take out). Conference can be exhausting. Take care of yourself first.
 - Talk to everyone. Standing in line? Good. Talk to whomever is in line near you. Make friends. Ask where they are from. Ask: What are you most excited about at your library? If they have nothing positive to say, talk to someone else. The best part of a conference is the learning that happens with other attendees in the hallways, in line, at a social event, anywhere.
 - Bring business cards. If you don't have any, you can buy business-card paper (Avery products) and design your own & print them. It's not very expensive. There are templates in Microsoft Word.
 - Bring a sweater. It's summer in Las Vegas, this is perhaps the strangest advice of all, but 100 degrees outside then air conditioning inside? Inside room temperatures can feel cold. Wear/take layers.
 - Hydrate! Water is important and all that talking and walking and dry heat and moving from outside-to-inside can drain you. Drink water, stay healthy.
 - ALA has about 400 things going on at one (it seems). You won't see it all, it's okay.
 - Have a contact. If you are lost or panicked or don't know how something works & just can't bear to ask another stranger for help. Or, maybe you just are in need of a friendly face, have someone you can call. Have fun. It's a wonderful experience!

Here are some online lists with ideas:

<http://librarianbyday.net/2014/04/15/conference-travel-packing-survival-tips/>

<http://freerangelibrarian.com/2010/06/19/ala-conference-survival-tips-35-conferences-later/>

<http://libraryadventures.com/2011/10/31/10tips/>

Advice for the shy: <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/more-advice-for-the-shy/>