

Meet Your New/Renewed Candidates  
to the Board as of the AGAM 2023

Gail Ament – Vice President

Marirose Lescher – Treasurer (returning)

José Luis Zárate García – Director at Large  
(returning)

Viviana Ruiz – Director at Large

Bios attached:

## VIVIANA RUIZ

I was born in Mexico City and I have lived in Oaxaca since 2003. Upon arriving in this beautiful city, I found out about the world of community work, first as a professional architect and later participating with various non-profit organizations.

My entry into the non-profit world has taught me a lot about the needs of communities. In addition, I have become familiar with the strengths of each social group, motivating them to develop those strengths to make significant and permanent changes. I believe that education, capacity building, and defining clear goals are key to helping vulnerable groups strengthen and shape their future and advance their dreams.

I have collaborated with *Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca*; *Centro Oaxaqueño de Rehabilitación de Audición y Lenguaje (CORAL)*. Currently, I am the Managing Director of *Fundación En Vía* and serve on the Board of the *Friends of the Oaxaca Learning Center*. As an architect, I am carrying out the design and the enlargement of *Centro de Aprendizaje de Oaxaca*.

On a personal level, I am interested in sustainability and developed a brief course that I teach each year to University of Washington students. The principles of sustainability are an important axis of my work and teach me how social, economic, and environmental elements can form an integrated system.

It is an honor to be nominated as a candidate to form part of the Board of the Oaxaca Lending Library (OLL). The OLL is an organization that I admire and have known about through diverse activities that I have attended and through its community as well. I feel capable and motivated to be part of the program. I am excited to contribute, learn, and work together to achieve our collective goals.

I consider that my professional work, values, and principles align very well with OLL's mission and vision. In addition, it is an opportunity to influence new projects to generate a stronger and more integrated relationship between the foreign community and the Oaxacan community, for a better world for all.

## GAIL AMENT

Saludos, OLL members!

I am immensely pleased to finally be resident here year-round, able to contribute to the Library's mission long-term. I'm hopeful that both my academic career as professor of Spanish and my engagement with non-profits qualify me for the position of Vice President. Over the years at my university, I chaired the Humanities Division, the Modern Languages Department, and the Promotion and Tenure Committee, as well as serving on Faculty Senate.

In the nonprofit world, for many years I served as president of *Sharing the Dream in Guatemala*, which provides tutoring and material support for students living in poverty and also operates an elder center and facilitates sales for artisans. In my community of Sioux City, IA, I served for nearly six years on the Board of Trustees of the *Sioux City Art Center*, appointed by City Council, including two years as chair. I currently serve on the Book Committee of the *Oaxaca Lending Library*. I am honored to be nominated for the position of Vice President of OLL, and I am excited about the prospects of serving the library in this capacity!

## José Luis Zárate García

Originally from Oaxaca, Mexico, I studied agronomy with a specialty in the design of machines for agriculture. Subsequently, I completed diplomas in agroecology and documentary cinema.

I have extensive experience in the use of participatory methodologies for diagnosing problems and needs, strategic planning, project management, risk management, and contingency planning.

I have frequently participated as a workshop speaker, panelist and lecturer in different national and international events with a special focus on community development.

My passion for photography and video has allowed me to show others the realities of rural and urban life.

Since assuming the position of Executive Director of *Libros Para Pueblos* in September 2016, I have helped to organize and participated in all LPP working committees.

## **Marirose Lescher**

For the past two years, I have served as Treasurer of the OLL. The experience has made me yet more impressed with the breadth of the OLL operations and the dedication of staff and volunteers. I am looking forward to serving the OLL community as Treasurer for another term.

I am a former banking and finance attorney: I was the Associate General Counsel of The Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, and a corporate and municipal finance partner in a minority-and-women-owned law firm in San Francisco. After seventeen years of practicing law, I returned to school - something I swore I would never, ever, ever do after law school. I hold a Master of Divinity degree and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies (concentrations in Theology, Ethics, Culture and Women's Studies in Religion). During graduate school, I served as a hospice chaplain, and as a graduate school instructor.

I live in San Andres Huayapam with four dogs who are intent on herding cats (and other animals), and one unherded cat who is the jefe (because she poked some holes in the bodies of the dogs).