

I attended the Minnesota Library Association Annual Conference in Duluth on October 12 – 14, 2011. This was my first time attending the annual MLA event and I had a wonderful time! As the Youth Services Librarian for the Fergus Falls Public Library, I chose to follow the “Children and Young Adults” track at the conference. While there, I heard a librarian say “you know you’re at a good conference when you can’t decide which session to choose” and that person was absolutely right! I did find it difficult to selection which programs to attend but in the end I went with:

- 42 in 60: The Meaning of Life, the Universe, and New Graphic Novels
- Organize Your Ordering: Buying Materials for Your Children’s Collections
- 40 in 60: Great Books for Kids and Teens
- Board @ Your Library? Hot Board Games for Cool Librarians
- Things in a Flash: The Latest Web 2.0 Tools
- So What is this Thing Called Intellectual Freedom?

Listening to other librarians share their knowledge and passion is always inspiring! I walked away with so much information. I learned about so many great books for both children and teens and I’ve already added a number them to my collection’s “to buy” list. It was really nice to get some new graphic novel recommendations for all age groups since we’re working on expanding our current GN section. I’m currently using (on a daily basis) one of the Web 2.0 tools that I learned about called “Wunderlist” (an online to-do list application) and it’s a great way to help me stay organized at work! And speaking of being organized-the session on buying materials for collections and organizing your ordering was really helpful since I only order a small percentage of the books at my previous position.

It was also inspiring and a delight to hear from the keynote speakers, authors Anita Silvey and William Kent Krueger, as well as Professor Scott Nicholson. And the Legacy Program Showcase entertainment on Thursday night was phenomenal! It would be great to have any of those acts visit your library (I’m going to try really hard to get the Okee Dokee Brothers here one day)! Finally, one of the most important things that I gained from attending MLA were the contacts that I was able to make. I’ve already emailed some of the presenters with follow-up questions and have really appreciated the feedback I’ve received!

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