

Northern Lights Library Network Governing Board

Director's Report Aug 18, 2007

Meetings/Activities

JUNE

- 6/26 University of MN Presidential Award Ceremony for Bill DeJohn, MINITEX, Eastcliff, Minneapolis
6/27 Ready4K Annual Meeting (Chair, Nominations Committee), St Paul

JULY

- 7/6 Meeting with Chris McArthur regarding summer work on North Star Library Consortium
7/9 Meeting with Mosaic Consulting about bookkeeping, NLLN Office
7/11 Meeting with Ann Treacy regarding webpage development; upgrade; St Paul
7/12 MLA/MEMO Legislative Forum, Maplewood, MN
7/17-18 Mn Multitype Directors' Meeting, St Cloud
7/18 Ready4K Nominations Committee meeting, telephone conference
7/19 Meeting with Chris McArthur regarding summer work on North Star Library Consortium
7/20 OPAL Conference with Jennifer Hootman, MINITEX, regarding webconferencing and Workshop planning
7/21-27 Trip to Montana
7/31 Mn Book Award 2008 Planning Committee meeting, telephone conference

August

- 8/2 Training visit to Browns Valley School with Chris McArthur, Browns Valley
8/3 Meeting with Bruce Pomerantz regarding 2007 Report of Results, telephone conference
8/6 Mn Council of NonProfits Leadership Conference: Network Leadership, U of MN, Minneapolis
8/8 Community Collaboratives Brain Development Conference, Mahnomen
8/10 Spotlight on Books 2008 Planning Committee meeting, Sugar Lake Lodge,
8/13-15 NLLN Audit begun
8/13 Mosaic Consulting meeting with NLLN staff and Eide Bailly staff
8/16 "Back to School Special" Workshop for school media center staff, Detroit Lakaes
8/18 NLLN Governing Board meeting, Detroit Lakes

Beginning with this first Director's Report for NLLN Fiscal Year 2008, I will broadly summarize the work and accomplishment under the broad categories of the NLLN Strategic Plan 2008-2010.

Continuing Education

- **OPAL training:** We have renewed our subscription to the OPAL web-based conferencing software and have been using it on a trial basis with a number of different people in order to figure out what to expect in terms of ease of use, possible good uses, barriers, etc. We are planning on doing a meeting with the multitype directors meeting in

- late August to explore the North Star Library Consortium and the ability to replicate this project in other parts of the state.
- **Teleconferences from the College of DuPage:** We will once again be partnering with MSU-M as a satellite downlink site for these teleconferences, as well as making them available via webstreaming to individual desktop computers. NLLN provides the online registration, linking information, and archive site. This looks like an interesting year and will include teleconferences in both the “Soaring to Excellence” and the “Challenges and Opportunities” series.
 - **NLLN Scholarship program:** We have begun receiving scholarship applications for this year and anticipate it will be a big year for scholarship requests. The MEMO Fall Conference will be held at Cragun’s Resort this year which will allow more people from the NLLN region to attend; the national Public Library Association Conference will be held in the Minneapolis in March 2008. We expect good attendance at both of these events. I also anticipate we will have more requests this year for people who are interested in greater personal involvement in professional organizations, and people who would like to attend other types of national conferences.
 - **“Back to School Special” Workshop (Aug 16):** This workshop is geared toward staff in school media centers and will feature Jennifer Hootman (MINITEX Reference) who will demonstrate how to create free, fast, effective web-based guides, WebJunction, and some of the new ELM functionality; Bruce Pomerantz (State Library Services) will introduce the new school media center survey being introduced this year; Chris McArthur and Bob Wheeler who will talk about the Destiny 7.0 and 7.5 upgrades; and information about resources available via the NLLN website. We expect about 35 participants.
 - **Destiny training for new staff (Sept 20):** We will be conducting a full day workshop for new staff in existing Destiny sites. Chris McArthur and I will conduct this day. It can be used as a refresher training for those who are interested.
 - **Spotlight on Books 2008:** Planning is well under way for the 20th Annual Spotlight on Books Conference. It will be great! Featured on Friday afternoon will be Jim Trelease of “Read Aloud” fame; Saturday will feature a variety of children’s authors, displays, “showcases”, and authors from past years’ conferences. Bigger and better publicity is being planned for this event, including increased access to information and registration via the NLLN webpage.
 - **MLA, MEMO, NDLA, etc Fall Conferences:** NLLN is promoting attendance at the Fall Conferences for the various library associations. See the NLLN Calendar of Events for more information.

Advocacy

- **MLA/MEMO Legislative Forum:** The Forum was fairly well-represented by a diverse collection of library professionals, including school, academic, public and special library representatives. A recap of the past legislative session was held, platform building for the 2008 session was begun, and a panel provided good insight into effective lobbying strategies. The MLA and MEMO Legislative committees will continue the work of creating a platform. This is a “bonding year” so library construction will figure prominently. There are a number of public libraries in the NLLN region who are in some stage of planning or beginning construction projects.
- **Ready4K:** I am chair of the R4K nominating committee which proposed not only the new officers for the R4K Board but potential new members of the Board. I have felt this was an opportunity for library advocacy and several new Board members have been proposed from the library community.
- **Dept of Human Services Family, Friend and Neighbor Grants:** I have worked with Gretchen Wronka, Hennepin Co Library, and staff of R4K, to incorporate guidelines for libraries who wish to apply for grants under this grant program. New legislation provided \$250,000 for one time grants and libraries are eligible to apply for these grants to be used in support of family, friend and neighbor (FFN) child care providers. These are usually

- unlicensed providers who have special needs in terms of access to high quality resources for parents and caregivers.
- **Meetings with local legislator:** I had two conversations with Rep Paul Marquart about the past legislative session (thanking him for increased funding for libraries) and about the upcoming session. We discussed local government aid, taxes, and state funding for K-12 education. He is supportive of libraries and education; he is also chair of an important house tax committee. A special session might result in adoption of the tax bill that had been vetoed by the governor after the end of the session. This might be helpful in terms of LGA money available to local libraries.
 - **Mn Book Award Program 2008:** I have written a report for the Planning Committee regarding the traveling display of 2007 MBA books and offering to expand that program in 2008. This is an opportunity to link libraries and communities in greater MN to the nominated authors and to give greater visibility to the Mn Book Award Program. I am also promoting a new grant program, funded by State Library Services, that provides for author appearances in libraries.
 - **Mn Council of Non-Profits Leadership Conference:** Although this conference was primarily for my own personal benefit and growth as a leader, it was an opportunity to be a library voice in an important arena attended by few librarians. It was a great conference on building networks, providing leadership to networks, and making our various types of networks strong by interacting with others. Library advocacy was somewhat of an unplanned for opportunity.
 - **New NLLN Members:** We have been updating our membership agreements and adding new NLLN members.

Communication

- **Webpage enhancements:** The webpage continues to be upgraded, tweaked, and expanded. Although it feels like slow and intermittent work, Ann Treacy and I have identified a number of areas (including the banner picture and the online calendar of events) that can be improved. Also, Chris McArthur and I have been adding content to the North Star Library Consortium webpages. The NLLN webpage is an ongoing process.
- **Survey Monkey:** the subscription was temporarily discontinued but I anticipate that we will activate it again in order to do some surveys, particularly among school media center staff, to update our records. Quite a few changes have taken place in staffing and we are trying to find an efficient way of getting and maintaining accurate information. The multitype systems are the primary source of good data on school libraries as this information is not collected at the Mn Dept of Education.
- **Listservs:** The NLLN and the North Star Library Consortium electronic mailing lists have been fairly quiet over the summer months but we are seeing more activity as the new school year begins and the summertime lull comes to an end. We are reviewing subscribers to these lists, adding new subscribers, and documenting the number of messages sent out.
- **Newsletter:** We are preparing to publish our first issue of a completely electronic newsletter, distributed via email. We will be using Constant Contact for this newsletter and will welcome feedback. Although we will send out invitations to subscribe to this newsletter, it is an opt-in subscription meaning that people have to agree to receive it via email.
- **Blog:** The NLLN blog was busy in the first part of July with many postings, and quieter toward the end of the month when I was on vacation. I expect that it will be more robust as we come into the Fall.
- **Photogallery:** The NLLN photogallery on the NLLN webpage (a Flickr account) has new pictures posted all the time. I have not figured out how to post the movies we made at the last Governing Board meeting, but that might not be a bad thing if they don't get posted. They were a tad strange!

- **Spotlight and North Star Library Consortium webpages:** We have added new content to both of these webpages within the NLLN website and are getting good responses from them. Online registration is particularly useful, quick, and easy.
- **Brochure:** A new NLLN brochure, based on the strategic plan report for 2005-2007 is only in the beginning stages of being created. I hope it will begin to take shape in Sept and October.

Resource Sharing

- **CatExpress:** We are in the process of renewing our current CatExpress group subscription and adding new members to it.
- **North Star Library Consortium:** We have added several new members to the Consortium and are in the process of adding them to the Destiny program.
- **Chris McArthur's summer work:** Chris has been working all summer with the newest members of the North Star Consortium, particularly in the area of retrospective conversion and training. Several of our unautomated sites have not been able to progress as we had hoped, but local issues seem to have caused the delay. Chris has been busy.
- **Alpha V database:** Chris McArthur has spent part of the summer developing a comprehensive database for the NLLN membership using the Alpha V software. This is a complex project, but one that she seems to enjoy and is making good progress on. We have not had a particularly good membership directory on our website and feel the state library directory does not adequately meet our needs. Also, we have need for a fairly complex database that will meet our needs for an online directory, mailing list, web-based database updatable by multiple people, and a way to track participation in the North Star Consortium, CatExpress, Spotlight on Books, Scholarships, Continuing Education, training, etc.

Other:

- **Mosaic Consulting – Bookkeeping services:** We have spent a great deal of time in July and August, creating a new set of QuickBooks records for NLLN, incorporating new financial procedures, and figuring out an efficient method of working with Mosaic Consulting in providing bookkeeping services. It is coming together well, but we're not quite done.
- **Audit FY2007:** We have begun the 2007 audit and it will be a year of transition. Eide Bailly is again doing the audit and is working with us, as well as Mosaic Consulting, to make the transition to new bookkeeping methods, a new budget format, and new reporting mechanisms for FY08. So far, it is going well but is time consuming. It feels good to clean up some areas that have been confusing the past few years.
- **Office Manager:** Deb Keena has assumed the position of NLLN Office Manager as of July 1, 2007, and is working 20 hours a week. This has been a period of adjustment for all of us as her job duties change and her hours decrease. I believe it is going well, though I miss having her in the office those other 10 hours. I believe once the bookkeeping is established and the audit complete, we'll have more time to concentrate on some of the new aspects of her job that we want to explore.

Ruth Solie
August 18, 2007