

Northern Lights Library Network

Director's Report Feb 21, 2009

- Dec 24-30 To Montana for Christmas holiday
- Jan 5 Becker Co Children's Initiative exploratory meeting, Detroit Lakes
Jan 8 Srysi-Dynix Institute presentation: Pat Wagoner – online webinar
Jan 13 Multitype Directors' Meeting via OPAL (replacing face-to-face
Meeting scheduled for St Cloud – cancelled due to weather)
Jan 19 Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday – NLLN Office closed
Jan 20 "More Things on a Stick" project was launched
Jan 21 Planning meeting with Mary Mehsikomer, Patricia Post for Jan 26
Meet Your Destiny workshop
Jan 22 Planning meeting with Paul Moe, Laurie Conzemius, Patricia Post
For *Games and Gadgets* event Jan 25
Jan 23 Meeting with Elaine Keefe, Ann Walker Smalley, Patricia Post to
Discuss legislative issues involving multitype systems
(I participated by phone)
Jan 25-26 *Games and Gadgets* plus *Meet Your Destiny* workshop, Arrowwood
Conference Center, Alexandria
Jan 31 Minnesota Book Award finalist selection, Minneapolis
- Feb 4 Legislative Committee meeting, via ITV, Pelican Rapids
Feb 9 --partial snow day; worked mostly from home; Deb unable to get in
Feb 10 Ready 4 K Board meeting – telephone conference
Feb 16 President's Day Observed – NLLN Office closed
Feb 17 Meeting with Lina Belar re LSTA and other grants
Feb 21 NLLN Governing Board Meeting – Detroit Lakes

Continuing Education events/activities

1. Launched the "More Things on a Stick: A Library 2.0 Learning Project" and have had a good response in the NLLN region. So far, to date we have 40 participants who have registered their blogs and are starting on the followup program of the "23 Things on a Stick" project. I have noticed that though the numbers are a little lower than last year, those who are doing the new project show quite a bit of confidence in what they are doing. Those just joining for the first time are finding the learning curve is a little steep. It is very engaging, for me, to work with this project from all angles: designer, participant, and administrator.
2. The multitype systems have been asked to participate in a "23 Things Online Summit" on March 3. Ann Walker Smalley and I will represent the 23 Things on a Stick project. This summit came about as the state of Kansas was looking into providing a 23 Things project statewide. As they were planning it they had many questions of others who have done such projects and wanted to benefit from others experience. Our "23 Things on a Stick" project is one of the largest and most successful state-wide projects of this type.

3. We did a major workshop Jan 25-26 at Arrowwood for the members of the North Star Library Consortium and other Destiny users in Minnesota. We had predominately Consortium members and nearly equal numbers from the NLLN and CLME regions (54 attendees in total). We had a few prospective members and several metro area Destiny users.

We had a great time on Sunday evening playing games and investigating all kinds of gadgets, over hors d'oeuvres. The informal socializing and networking was as important as the smart phones, webcams, and Wii bowling. I think everyone had a good time.

Monday was a workshop on using Destiny: "Meet your Destiny". This was a little unusual in format, but considered quite successful by all who attended. The agenda and topics for the day were established beforehand via a wiki for this conference. Individuals indicated topics they wanted to know more about and topics about which they would be willing to speak. We ended up with a full day that worked out quite well. It was intense, it was participant driven, and it was invigorating. Mary Mehsikomer, Region 1, did an afternoon session on 21st Century learners and media centers, and we generated information about how Destiny and the North Star Library Consortium contributed to creating a quality media center that supported 21st learners.

4. The Spotlight on Books Conference is moving ahead. Our authors have been selected, and we are looking forward to a Readers' Theater on Friday evening presented by our featured authors. In addition to our Fri afternoon workshop, "Keeping Them Reading", we'll have book displays, book sales, and book signings. Saturday will be centered on our featured authors – 4 of them this year. We are uncertain about registration numbers: last year was terrible weather, and this year not only is weather a potential issue, but travel budgets are very tight in all types of libraries. We'll hope for the best.
5. Scholarships are being applied for in steady numbers for all kinds of events. That's very good to see and people are always grateful for the additional funds.
6. Professional Engagement Funds have been used by 2 people to date, and we anticipate that there will be more use of these funds as we spread the word about their availability.
7. We continue to sponsor the teleconference series from the College of DuPage and have good attendance at the site at MSUMoorhead. Registration is done online through the NLLN site.
8. Mobile computer lab – I have finally gotten most of the information I need in order to begin the ordering process but have not yet placed the final order. I appreciate the help I have been given by professionals in the region – and elsewhere -- who have shared their expertise and experience.

ADVOCACY

1. Legislative engagement: the MLA/MEMO platform has been revised a number of times in light of the economic situation in the state of MN. It is available on MN WebJunction. Overall, no one is hopeful about receiving increases in basic

system support and more likely we will have a hard time maintaining our current financial base. At present, the multitype library systems and the regional public library systems are hoping to maintain their current level of funding. Higher education is seeing severe cuts all across the state and their libraries are feeling the impact of that. Public libraries are under the additional stress of seeing reductions in local government aid to cities and counties and pressures to remove maintenance of effort requirements. All in all, there are huge pressures everywhere and resolution of those issues will not be easy.

2. Three multitype library system directors met with Elaine Keefe to consult with her about strategies to strengthen support for all types of libraries. We also took that opportunity to let her know more about the types of cooperative activities the multitype systems make possible. The North Star Library Consortium is a great example of cooperation, cost savings, and support of student achievement.
3. Early Childhood Education: Ready 4 K, in collaboration with a wide range of early childhood advocates and agencies, has produced a legislative policy agenda surrounding early childhood care and education issues. This is an issue supported by the MLA/MEMO platform and one on which I have been actively working. Again, it is a very difficult situation in the legislature and one which has strong support on both sides of the issue. The biggest hope is to maintain the gains made in the past few years of recovery from massive cuts 4 years ago.
4. Becker County Early Childhood Initiative exploratory work: Becker County is interested in joining the 80+ other communities in Minnesota who have become an Early Childhood Initiative community under the auspices of one of the Minnesota Initiative Funds. In this case, Becker Co will be working with the West Central Initiative Fund in Fergus Falls. I have worked with this (as well as the other early childhood communities in the NLLN region) to represent libraries and the services of libraries to children, parents, and care-providers.
5. Minnesota Broad Band Access issues: I have become active in the e-Democracy, Minnesota Voices Online, and the Blandin Broadband Initiative digital communities. Peg Werner represents libraries on the Governor's Taskforce on UltraHigh Speed Broad Band Access. Rural needs are unevenly represented, so all the support that can be generated at the grassroots level is important. There is a lot of work to be done here to insure that rural Minnesota (and, of course, our schools and libraries) are not overlooked in the broadband access discussion.

Communication: All the channels continue to be used: electronic, print, telephonic, and face-to-face. Social networking tools are increasingly important to the way we connect – and they are all getting a good workout! New tools are always becoming available. Finding which are useful to us and which are not is always challenging (and always kind of fun!). The recent attention that the growth of Twitter has received and the brouhaha over Facebook's Terms of Service agreement have made for lots of activity in the cybersphere recently. I hope we will be able to explore more of these things at our meeting.

Ruth Solie - Feb 21, 2009