

Northern Lights Library Network

Director's Report February 20, 2010

Meetings/Events

Dec 12	NLLN Governing Board Meeting
Dec 15	Meeting with Bob Wheeler, Lori Thompson, Patricia Post re: E2T2 Grant final report
Dec 21-31	Ruth on vacation – to Montana for the holidays
Dec 28-31	NLLN Office closed
January	
Jan 1	NLLN Office closed – New Year's Day Holiday
Jan 5	Planning meeting for Jan 25 workshop; phone with Mary Mehsikomer and Patricia Post
Jan 6	MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meeting, online webinar format
Jan 10	[Attended a baby shower for Brenda Hough via a virtual video connection provided by Northeast Kansas Library System. It was a "better than
	nothing" way to attend, but it was fun. I was also interested in their use of a free video Web conferencing tool.]
Jan 13	"Fight the Filter" ALA/SLJ webinar presented by Buffy Hamilton
Jan 14-15	Multitype Directors Quarterly Meeting in St Cloud. I am chair this year.
Jan 18	Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday – NLLN Office closed
Jan 20	OPAL training session with Robin Chaney in the SAMMIE region.
Jan 21	Provided the 10 computer NLLN mobile computer lab to the Fergus Falls Public Library for an evening program on the catalog/webpage.
Jan 24-25	"Real Learning for the Real World" with presenter Buffy Hamilton. Workshop Provided as part of the E2T2 grant. Alexandria.
Jan 26	Training tools webinar presented by Beth Kanter, online
Jan 27	"Staying Current and Dealing with Information Overload" webinar by Sarah Houghton-Jan, online
Jan 28	"Using Google for Research" presented by Martha Hardy, Metro State, a Minitex Webinar, online
Jan 29	North Star Library Consortium conference call with Follett, Region 1, and CMLE Regarding new price structure and March deployment group, phone
February	
Feb 3	MLA/MEMO Legislative committee meeting, online webinar
Feb 1-12	Spotlight on Books Conference work: brochure design, webpage update, Electronic newsletter, registration forms, publicity distribution, program planning
	Annual meeting planning; Financial Procedures update
Feb 11	ALA Tech Trends at ALA Midwinter Conference, webinar, online
Feb 15	President's Day Holiday – NLLN Office closed
	Visit with Joan Larson regarding use of web 2.0 tools for planning; updating Spotlight on Books authors; MEMO Conference authors
Feb 16	Attended "Home Grown Economy" Conference sponsored by Rep Collin Peterson. I attended in Fergus Falls on MState campus.
Feb 19	Teleconference: Cataloging (from DuPage Library series)
Feb 20	NLLN Governing Board Meeting, Detroit Lakes

Director's Report:

Continuing Education

Real Learning for the Real World was a fabulous hands-on workshop conducted by Georgia School Librarian, Buffy Hamilton, known as the Unquiet Librarian. Buffy is a rising star in the library world as she shares her best practices, her thoughtful reflections, and her boundless enthusiasm for supporting learners of all ages in all types of settings. She is a high school librarian in Georgia who blogs, presents, and interacts on a variety of platforms. She spent a memorable blizzard-y weekend in Alexandria with us addressing the topic of creating our own personal learning networks and supporting students in creating their own personal learning networks. It was wonderful as Buffy worked with us to learn to use tools that helped us manage information, interact with our learning community, and support the learners around us. The weather was dramatic – a full-blown blizzard – but Buffy was a trouper and Mary Mehsikomer, who provided transportation from the Fargo airport to Alexandria and back, was intrepid. We did have an extra day as Buffy's return flight was cancelled, and we spent that bonus time in informal learning and exchange. More information about the tools and personal learning networks can be found on the Libguide Buffy created for this workshop at: <http://www.theunquietlibrary.libguides.com/pln> This workshop was funded by the E2T2 grant and was sponsored by NLLN, CMLE, and Region 1 on behalf of the North Star Library Consortium. We had over 40 registered but due to bad weather we had only 22 people make it. January events are always a roll of the dice when it comes to weather.

Work on the **Spotlight on Books Conference**, April 23-24, 2010, is in high gear as the publicity is circulated, the brochure designed, created, and mailed, books are being ordered, webpage updated, displays arranged for, programs dreamed up... lots to be done but many people helping to make it a success. To date registrations are coming in fairly slowly. Given the bad weather the past 2 years and the state of organizational travel funds, we do not anticipate large numbers of attendees. NLLN Scholarships, we hope, will make it possible for anyone in the NLLN region to attend.

Teleconferences: We continue to make the teleconferences from the College of DuPage available for the region via on-site viewing at Livingston Lord Library-MSUM and streaming video. These have been fairly popular this year, but the number of viewers depends on the topic and the availability of the archived broadcast. The 11-12:30 time slot for the original broadcast is difficult for many people. This statewide program is paid for and coordinated through Minitex.

NLLN Annual Meeting: This has been a roller coaster ride and more discussion will be held at the Board meeting. For certain: the Annual Meeting will be held April 17, 2010, at the Veterans Museum, In Their Own Words, in Perham.

Things on a Stick: The very popular 23 Things on a Stick (2008) and the More Things on a Stick (2009) projects continues in 2010 in a new format. **Things on a Stick News** will be published electronically once a month by the 7 multicounty, multitype library systems. Each issue will feature one or more "things" (Web 2.0 tools) that might be of interest to anyone, but particularly to those who have been participating in the various projects. The electronic newsletter is open to subscription by anyone and is archived at <http://tinyurl.com/yjq9h6b> . The Things on a Stick blog is found at <http://thingsonasticknews.blogspot.com/> .

Online Staff Development Opportunities: From the list of activities and events preceding this report, you can see that I take advantage of a number of online learning opportunities each month. Many of these are extraordinary opportunities to engage professionally with a wide array of colleagues nationally and internationally on diverse topics from my own computer. The learning is tremendous. Although I can participate in only a small portion of events that are available, I try to share information about these opportunities, comment on them, and provide links to archived

versions when available. Some of these archived sessions are extremely useful and can be re-used at other events. I hope to incorporate at least one of these sessions into the regional MEMO meeting scheduled for April.

Continuing Education/Staff development events and opportunities are our first priority goal and we continue to make these as responsive, effective, and timely as possible. Use of the webpage, electronic newsletters, Twitter, Facebook, email, SMS, and print materials help us distribute information about opportunities – but effective communication is one of the major challenges and one that I continue to focus on.

Advocacy

This is our 2nd ranked goal in the strategic plan. Advocacy takes many forms and is a constant in my life.

MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee: attending these meetings, participating in Library Legislative Day at the Capitol, making the MLA/MEMO Legislative platform available, talking with state and federal legislative representatives is an on-going process. I appreciate NLLN's support in making it possible for me to participate in these activities.

7th Congressional District Home Grown Economic Development Conference: I attended this Conference in the Fergus Falls location (there were 5 locations across the district). I feel it is important for libraries to be a "voice at the table" at events like this. It was a tremendously interesting Conference sponsored by Rep Collin Peterson and included Dept of Agriculture Secretary Vilsack. Of most interest to me, however, was the local component that addressed the issues of local food production and distribution, particularly in relation to the Farm to School programs in our area.

Minnesota Library Futures Initiative: At our most recent multitype directors meeting we had an important discussion with Elaine Keefe about the current economic conditions in MN, the status of the Legislative Auditor's Report on Libraries, the State Library Plan for MN Libraries, and other circumstances that are having an impact on all types of libraries, e.g., retiring baby boomers, loss of school librarians. We believe that the time is right to address how libraries can meet these current and future challenges. We have proposed that this is a good time initiate these conversations and identify issues, generate solutions, and take action. The first step is to create a steering committee and identify the process for creating this Library Futures Initiative. It is our hope that the "next generation" of librarians and library staff will be a key part of this initiative. They will be the ones who take Minnesota libraries into the future. More on this will be reported as it develops.

Meeting with Elaine Keefe, with local legislators, participating in caucus night: Although some of these conversations have a partisan slant, it seems to me that all opportunities to talk with elected officials and with fellow citizens about the value of libraries, what libraries contribute to our community, how efficiently libraries use funds, how libraries provide access to the electronic world, how libraries support learners of all ages in a huge array of ways – is always good. Putting a "face" on libraries; telling the story of libraries (We Save Money); connecting on a personal level is important advocacy.

Communication

Constant Contact: we have ramped up our use of Constant Contact as a communication tool and have much more that we can do with fine tuning it for making it effective for sharing, advocacy, and for promoting participation. Reports from Constant Contact allow us to gauge how effective this tool is – and it is always fun to see who got the message, opened it, clicked on something.

Webpage: This is still the core of our communication, in my opinion. Keeping all the parts of it up to date and current requires a lot of attention. We average 12-15 hits a day from individuals, so we know that the webpage is being used on a regular basis. At times of special events, we see webpage use sharply increase. There are always a lot of things that need to be done – and we continue to find ways to make it faster, more efficient, and easier to update.

Mailing: We don't do much direct mail because of the time and cost of producing and mailing items. The Spotlight on Books brochure is an exception. With the help of the graphic design person at the Arrowhead Library System, Brian Minor, we put together an attractive brochure/registration form for Spotlight and mailed it to over 600 people. The PDF form of this document, however, went to several thousand more people at absolutely no additional cost. We will probably continue to send out a printed brochure for Spotlight, but I think our return on investment diminishes slightly every year.

Resource Sharing

The **North Star Library Consortium** is one form of resource sharing. The staff development workshops, the web support, and the electronic listserv continue to support the members of the Consortium. We applied for, but did not receive, a third Enhancing Education Through Technology Grant (E2T2). This will not have an effect on our ability to continue expanding membership in the Consortium or on the on-going operation of the Consortium.

We have recently met with Follett representatives (makers of the *Destiny* software used by the Consortium) and negotiated a special price reduction in the cost of initial licenses and training. We anticipate doing a March deployment of new members to the Consortium, and have put new energy into making this opportunity available to libraries in the NLLN region who are not yet members of the Consortium.

White Earth and Leech Lake Early Childhood Readmobiles: These programs have the exciting possibility of new vehicles for their programs. Hennepin County Library has proposed to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners that 2 retired Readmobiles (fairly new) be "loaned" to the reservation early literacy programs. Since the HCL program involving Readmobiles was suspended indefinitely, the vehicles have been sitting unused for the past few months. We are waiting to see if they might become the ultimate "interlibrary loan"! NLLN will again assist both programs with book selection, processing, and training for staff, parents, and caregivers – hopefully with 2 new vehicles to be included. I have had the wonderful opportunity to work with Gretchen Wronka, Jean Strauchon, Barb Fabre, and Lee Turney to make this happen.

Mobile Laptop Computer Lab: We again shared out laptop computers with the Fergus Falls Public Library for a hands-on program related to use of the catalog and FFPL webpage resources.

OPAL Webconferencing Software subscription: We have shared this subscription with the SAMMIE region for demonstration purposes. They are considering purchase of a subscription and are happy to use ours until they have a chance to learn and evaluate it for their purposes.

The Big Read grant from the Fergus Falls/Viking area: This year NLLN agreed to be a consultant partner in the Big Read proposal submitted by Fergus Falls and surrounding communities. For the past number of years, this group has submitted winning proposals for outstanding Big Read programs. Each year they have extended the reach of the proposal to include new communities. Schools and libraries are important partners in this program and we're happy to be part of such an outstanding regional program. The Big Read is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. Last year, the Fergus Falls proposal was the only Big Read grant given in Minnesota. The book selected for this year's proposal is *Love Medicine* by Louise Erdrich.

Ruth Solie, Feb 20, 2010