

## Northern Lights Library Network

### Director's Report April 17, 2010

#### Meetings/Events

#### February

Feb 20 NLLN Governing Board Meeting, Detroit Lakes  
Feb 24 MLA/MEMO Library Legislative Day at the Capitol, St Paul

#### March

Mar 2 Visit with White Earth Early Childhood Programs, White Earth  
Mar 5 Minitex Advisory Policy Council, U of M-Andersen Library, Minneapolis  
Mar 12 Teleconference – Information Literacy; additional meetings with people in  
Moorhead, library visits  
Mar 17-18 Midwest Library Technology Conference, Macalester Campus, St Paul  
Mar 19 Conference call with Capstone Press and Barb Fabre re: National  
Indian Childcare Assoc board book possibility  
Mar 26 White Earth Early Childhood Initiative meeting, White Earth  
Mar 31-Apr 1 Multitype Library Systems Directors' meeting, St Paul

#### April

April 2 Pick up Mn Book Award Finalists display; Maud Hart Lovelace Display  
for Spotlight on Books Conference  
April 7 MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meeting, online  
April 9 Teleconference: Tech Trends, online  
Apr 12 ALA National Library Week program with Neil Gaiman, online  
Apr 15 NLLN Mobile Computer Laptop lab to FFPL for program  
Apr 16 Meeting with Paul Bursik re Annual Meeting  
Apr 17 NLLN Annual Meeting, ITOW Veterans Museum, Perham, MN  
Annual Meeting preparation and planning for Spotlight on Books  
Conference throughout the month.

#### Report:

This will be brief, allowing the program of the NLLN Annual Meeting to replace a full Director's Report.

Two items are of particular interest:

1. The recent release of the Report on Public Libraries done by the Office of the Legislative Auditor. The full report can be found at: <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/2010/libraries.htm>

There is one recommendation in the report, and it concerns the multitype library systems, so we will want to discuss this report at future meetings. At the moment, however, I have discussed this with my multitype library system colleagues; with Suzanne Miller, State Librarian; with Elaine Keefe, MLA/MEMO Lobbyist; and with Representative Kent Eken, in addition to several of the regional public library system directors. I also wrote a letter to Rep Mary Murphy who chairs the

Cultural and Outdoor Resources Committee that requested the study and held an initial hearing to receive the report. No legislative action is anticipated this session which will give the entire library community an opportunity to discuss this report, plan for a response, and be involved in any potential legislative action that will take place. I hope you will be able to read the report, or at least the summary.

A major concern for me is the fact that the report is about public libraries and did not fully examine the work, programs, services, or structures of the multitype library systems beyond a limited look at services we provide public libraries. Since NLLN serves 4 regional public library systems, a very diverse array of academic institutions (including 2 branches of the U of MN, multiple MnSCU institutions, 3 tribal colleges, and several private colleges), nearly 200 school libraries in 88 districts, and an array of special libraries, this "one-size-fits-all" recommendation seems premature at best. The investigators did not fully examine multitype library systems and thus the research and data of the report is too incomplete and inaccurate to support the oversimplified, recommendation.

It is an interesting report, however, and it is worth a considered conversation by the Board, and with our colleagues in all types of libraries. Public libraries will address the majority of the report but all types of libraries are potentially affected by it.

**2. Library Futures Initiative:** the Minnesota Library community will be creating a Library Futures Initiative this Spring to consider how libraries can effectively respond to transformative power of technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as well as the impact of uncertain and changing economic conditions. Much is changing and much is unknown.

The multitype system directors will help launch this Futures Initiative, which will involve the entire library community. It will begin with a broadly representative steering committee to set up a selection process for "library futurists" who will then work to propose a future for libraries that is responsive to the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We believe it is these futurist librarians who will have the job of leading our libraries and they are the ones whose energies and vision will need to design that future.

More information will be available on this Initiative at our May 5<sup>th</sup> and June 19<sup>th</sup> meetings. It is an exciting process.

Ruth Solie  
April 17, 2010