

## Northern Lights Library Network

### Director's Report June 19, 2010

#### Meetings/Events

#### April

Apr 17 NLLN Annual Meeting, ITOW Veterans Museum, Perham, MN  
Apr 23-24 22 Annual Spotlight on Books Conference, Ruttger's Sugar Lake Lodge  
Apr 28 State Librarian Suzanne Miller's farewell event, St Paul

#### MAY

May 5 NLLN Governing Board Executive Committee meeting, Detroit Lakes  
May 6-10 Working with other multitype directors on Library Futures Initiative  
May 7-12 Out of office  
May 12 Library Futures Initiative – Steering Committee initial meeting was held  
in St Cloud. NLLN acts as fiscal agent.  
May 17-21 Operating Grant application FY2011/ Report of Results Accomplished  
FY2010 compiled  
May 28 Wrote/submitted the June "Things on a Stick" Newsletter

#### June

June 2 MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee meeting, online  
June 4 Minitex Policy Advisory Council, Andersen Library, UM, Mpls (phone)  
June 7 Provided presentation tech support for local women's organization  
June 7 Teacher-Librarian Virtual Café webinar on "Skype an Author"  
June 8 Trendy Libraries day long conference: Future of Libraries (online)  
June 9 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Library Futures Initiative – St Cloud was held  
June 9 Met with Gay and Erika to revise/create policies  
June 9 Rural Urban Partnership meeting – U of M, Morris  
June 10 Small Town Symposium and Rural Urban Partnership – Morris  
June 14 Planning for MEMO Conference presentation, Back to School  
June 15 VLS Open House, Fergus Falls  
June 16 Conference call regarding publication of NIACC Cradle Board Book  
June 19 NLLN Governing Board meeting, Detroit Lakes

#### Report:

#### Year end summary of work in 4 areas of the Strategic Plan, 2008-1010:

**Continuing Education:** Overall we provided, collaborated on, or participated in 16 Continuing Education events throughout the year that were attended by 308 people (not counting professional conferences).

These included the following:

#### North Star Library Consortium

Destiny Basic Training: 4 days; 60 people. Funded by E2T2

Back in School Workshop: 1 day 62 attendees Funded by E2T2  
Just in Time Training – a workshop: 1 day 16 attendees Funded by E2T2  
Real Learning for the Real World – a workshop: 1 day 47 attendees Funded by E2T2

**22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spotlight on Books Conference, April 23-24, 2010**

85 attendees; great conference. Total cost: 17,262.32 (\$12,352.86 Spotlight; \$2,857.04 NLLN; \$2052.42 – E2T2 Grant)

**MEMO Fall Conference:** Internet café; NSLC presentation; author signings; Things on A Stick session

**MLA Fall Conference:** Internet café (using NLLN computers); Things on a Stick session

**Library Media Workshop** (TRF w/ NWSC): 21 attendees. NLLN provided Minitex presenter; participated in presentations

**More Things on a Stick:** Year three of this popular statewide program provided by the 7 multitype systems has taken the form of a monthly *More Things on a Newsletter* featuring Web 2.0 tools, and an on-going blog that provides

*Stick*  
in-depth

info on the “things” included over the past 3 years. It builds on the highly successful “23 Things on a Stick” and “More Things on a Stick” programs done in the previous 2 years. I wrote the June issue of the Newsletter which goes to over 1200 subscribers statewide.

**Library Learning Network** (Minitex; MSUM-L Lord Library): 5 teleconferences; 14 registrations for on-site and webcast. Funded by Minitex; local site by MSUM; registration and webcast – NLLN.

**NLLN Annual Meeting, April 17, 2010**

23 attendees. Successful meeting with representatives of all types of libraries; showcase of NLLN services; Sen Dan Skogen spoke and author Kathy Sletto was the luncheon speaker.

**Advocacy:**

**Library Futures Initiative:** The seven multitype systems were responsible for convening the library community representatives as a steering committee to design and launch the Library Futures Initiative. NLLN is acting as the fiscal agent. This is an exciting venture.

**MLA/MEMO Legislative Committee:** Monthly meetings to support the library community’s legislative agenda at both the state and federal level.

**Library Legislative Day at the Capitol:** Along with library representatives from across the state, we descend on the state capitol to lobby for support of libraries, library services, and library programs.

**Testimony and conversation with legislators, legislative hearings:** I have written, talked with, and provided testimony to legislators regarding library matters as they arise. This has happened, formally and informally, during and outside, of legislative sessions.

**Work with school districts:** I am often called upon by local school library personnel for assistance in working with administrators and school boards to support school libraries, promote information literacy, and to talk about the North Star Library Consortium.

**NLLN Annual Meeting:** The Annual Meeting this year was an opportunity to hear from users of our services about the value of NLLN programs and the difference they make in their lives. This was useful in informing our review of the NLLN Strategic Plan.

**Mn Book Awards:** Again this year we were able to participate in the MBA process, to secure a touring collection of the nominated titles and winners, and distribute the multiple copies of MBA books nominated for the awards. Last year we distributed about 1200 new MN books; we anticipate about the same number of books will be available for distribution this year.

**Blandin Broadband Initiative:** I have had a relationship with this initiative in a variety of ways (primarily through the Minnesota Voices Online forums) and look forward to working with their Intelligent Rural Communities project funded by a federal stimulus grant.

**Early Childhood Initiatives, Ready4K:** I continue to work with a variety of early childhood programs at the regional and state level. Most directly with the White Earth Child Care Programs/White Earth Early Childhood Initiative/Family Friend and Neighbor program; the Becker County Early Childhood Initiative; the West Central Initiative Fund, and Ready4K.

**Rural-Urban Partnership Council:** I am participating in the formation of the Rural-Urban Partnering Council which emphasizes education, workforce development, and entrepreneurship to increase innovation and wealth creation across Minnesota. It is important that libraries of all types and sizes are included in this since library infrastructures represent a long-standing and successful rural-urban partnership. This is part of a national USDA-funded pilot project and is being coordinated by the Rural Minnesota Partnership.

### **Communication:**

**Webpage:** The webpage continues to function as the primary means of providing access to information, resources, and services of NLLN. It is rich and deep, including a blog, photo gallery, and a repository for Continuing Education Scholarship Reports. It is updated on an ongoing basis.

**Listserv:** NLLN hosts 3 email groups which provide a mechanism for information distribution and creation. The 3 groups are: NLLN's member list; North Star Library Consortium list for members of the Consortium; Minnesota multitype directors list.

**Wikis:** NLLN creates and maintains a number of wikis to support projects and program creation. They allow for broad collaboration among participants in conferences, workshops, and projects.

**Constant Contact/email:** We use this medium for all kinds of news and announcements because we are able to target the message to the appropriate recipients. We employ multiple lists and have a total subscription base of 766.

**Telephone:** This remains a fast, immediate, responsive way to communicate one-on-one. As long as there is not too much telephone tag involved, this 20<sup>th</sup> Century tool is still essential .

**Videoconferencing:** We have begun to do more of this using webcams (Skype) but have not been able to move to full-blown videoconferencing just yet.

**OPAL webconferencing:** We have used OPAL for online meetings, and for attending OPAL events. In the coming year we will look into other types of web and video conferencing that might be affordable and meet our needs.

### **Cooperation:**

All our services and programs are cooperative in nature and include multiple entities. All of the items listed above are examples of how NLLN facilitates cooperation among all types of libraries, and links libraries to other agencies and organizations.

### **Other:**

The following items are of particular interest:

1. The NLLN Mobile Laptop Computer Lab has proven to be far more versatile and useful than imagined when it was first created. These 10 laptop computers have been used in a variety of ways, including:

For participants in workshops

For training events where computers were not otherwise available, or in short supply  
For providing popular Internet Cafes at Conferences  
For loan to Board members and others for special projects, meetings  
For use by staff to experiment with open software, webcams, and experimental software  
For use by the NLLN Governing Board in meetings  
For use by member libraries for programming events

The computers are easily maintained, very portable (in two Stanley Tool totes), and all have a full range of free software on them in addition to having a built in webcams and wireless capability.

2. 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 which held an initial hearing to receive the report. No legislative action took place in the recent legislative session which will give the entire library community an opportunity to discuss this report, plan for a response, and to 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 insitutions, 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 over-simplified, 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.

**Ruth Solie**  
**June 2010**