

Northern Lights Library Network Governing Board

Director's Report June 21, 2008

Meetings/Activities

APRIL

- Apr 26 NLLN Annual Meeting, Thumper Pond, Ottertail City, MN CANCELLED due to weather. Business session moved to May 7, 2008; TechnoFit workshop with Brenda Hough will be rescheduled in September.
- Apr 28 Meeting with Patricia Post, CMLE, regarding implementation of E2T2 grant, St Cloud
- Apr 29 Multitype Library System Directors meeting in St Cloud

MAY

- May 5 MINITEX ILL Conference: Forecasting the Future of Social Networking, St Paul
- May 6 Meeting with Bob Wheeler regarding implementation of E2T2 grant, telephone
- May 7 NLLN Executive Board Meeting, Graystone Hotel, Detroit Lakes
- May 9 OPAL Casual Conversation: Jenny Levine, OPAL auditorium webconference
- May 13 North Star Library Consortium/E2T2 grant workshop – Alexandria
North Star Library Consortium/E2T2 grant workshop – Foley
- May 16 OPAL Casual Conversation: Stephen Abram, OPAL auditorium webconference
- May 22 Mn E-Learning Summit, Bloomington
- May 26 MEMORIAL DAY – NLLN Office closed
- May 29 NLLN Office flooded by broken water pipe in ceiling
- May 30 Vacation day to clean flooded home basement, office clean up...a long story

June

- June 4 Meeting with Chris McArthur to set summer workplan
- June 5 Set up North Star Library Consortium wiki, training schedule, contact sheets, etc
- June 6 MINITEX Policy Advisory Council, Minneapolis (attended via telephone conference call).
- June 10 Library Journal webcast: Teen Services in Public Libraries
Deb Wahl, LARL staff, joined me for this
WebJunction webinar: Creating Learning Environments
- June 11 Site visit to Naytahwaush Community Charter School/Chris McArthur working on Destiny implementation and media center re-organization
- June 13 Sirsi-Dynix Institute: Marshall Breeding "Beyond Web 2.0" – webinar
- June 18 Deb Keena performance review
- June 19 Meeting with Eide Bailly partner/Mosaic Consulting regarding changes
To audit procedures for governmental units, NLLN Office
- June 21 NLLN Governing Board Meeting, Graystone Hotel, Detroit Lakes

This Director's Report will note items of interest for the past 2 months as well as summarize the high points of the past year.

Continuing Education

- **Soaring to Excellence: "Tools of Engagement"**, teleconference. Again we partnered with MSU-M and the tri-college libraries to host a downlink site at MSU-M Livingston Lord Library and provided registration/streaming information for those wishing to view the teleconference via webstreaming. It was, as always, a worthwhile update on an important topic. We had 9 people attending on-site and an unknown number participating via webcast or archive version.
- **NLLN Annual Meeting TechnoFit Workshop with Brenda Hough:** This entire event was cancelled due to terrible weather. We will re-schedule it in September. The focus of this workshop will be how to manage your own individual learning and some tools to help you do it. It will also include a spotlight on those who completed the 23 Things on a Stick project and have begun incorporating those tools into their professional work.
- **23 Things on a Stick:** Round 2 of this popular project began May 15 and will run til Sept 15. To date we have 24 new or continuing participants in the NLLN region, and 388 statewide. A good response. In the first round of this project, the NLLN region had 110 blogs registered and 31 finishers who each received a flash drive and a certificate of completion. In addition, one of our participants was a recipient of one of the larger prizes, a flipcam, drawn from all finishers in the state. The enthusiasm and sense of accomplishment expressed by those who are engaged in or have completed the 23 Things continues to be very inspiring.
- **NLLN Scholarships:** This year NLLN has awarded 54 scholarships and expended \$13,863.70 to date on these. Although it is possible receive up to \$500.00 per individual, the average award was about \$250.00. The NLLN Governing Board designated reserve funds for these scholarships in FY08. We will consider incorporating them into our operating budget in future.
- **Overall Continuing Education/Staff Development for FY 2008:** We hosted or partnered to present 18 Continuing Education/Staff development events in FY08. 457 people participated in these events; we expended roughly \$9,000.00 overall for these events. The most expensive (\$4,475) was a 2-day Destiny training held in February for the last of the new members joining the North Star Consortium. Most events either incurred little or no expense (e.g., Soaring to Excellence; Library Challenges and Opportunities teleconferences). Spotlight on Books, 23 Things on a Stick, and the NLLN Annual Meeting had expenses in excess of \$1,000.00. We were well within our budget for this kind of programming.

Communication

- **Constant Contact:** This is a valuable, web-based subscription tool that has enabled us to communicate electronically with a large number of subscribers within, and beyond, the NLLN region. It is visually attractive, easy to use, provides great reports on who opened the mailings, what they clicked through, etc. We have subscribed to an archive service that allows us to easily and quickly link to any publication from our webpage and to embed the archive URL in blog posts, emails, and brochures. We use it for distribution of newsletter, announcements, and promotions to our general mailing list (399); we were

able to send out weekly news bulletins to over a thousand statewide participants in the 23 Things On A Stick project; we are able to keep distinct mailing lists by library type for targeted mailings on particular topics. Constant Contact is relatively inexpensive – cost is based on the number of subscribers we have but averages \$20/month, including the archive, for just our audience (about 500 subscribers) and went up to \$35/month when we were distributing the 23 Things News to statewide participants.

- **ListBox subscriptions:** NLLN maintains 3 email lists (listservs).
 1. The NLLN list is an open subscription list that any subscriber can send out messages on. We have 133 subscribers to this list and use it generally for forwarding announcements of interest and sharing timely information. The annual cost is minimal.
 2. The North Star Users list is a “closed” list at present and the 108 subscribers represent those people who are members of the Consortium or actively involved in the Consortium from Region 1 or Follett. The cost is \$108/year. This list is extremely useful for asking/answering questions, for sharing information about the Consortium or Destiny, for supporting media center staff who work in isolation, for supporting unlicensed paraprofessionals working alone in media centers, and for professional networking. This list will become an open list in the near future as we move beyond the NLLN region to include media centers in the Central Minnesota Library Exchange region.
 3. NLLN also hosts, and is the financial agent, for the Multitype Library Directors listserv. This list is closed and limited to the 7 multitype system directors and state library agency staff. It is paid for by the multitype systems. It is a very useful way to communicate among the directors and between the directors and the state library agency. It costs about \$100/year and is paid for by the multitype library systems on a formula basis; I am the manager/owner of this list.

- **NLLN Webpage:** This is a continual work in progress and one which is probably the most critical to our work. The NLLN webpage and email is hosted by iPower and costs about \$75/year for the hosting fees. Domain name registration is minimal and we own 2 domain names: nlln.org and northstarcatalog.org .The webpage design was created Ann Treacy of Treacy Information, and the content is updated and managed by the NLLN office (mostly me). Ann continues to provide consulting services to us for webpage enhancements, updating the seasonal banners, and adding new formats.

The core of the webpage centers around NLLN services, programs, and governance. It includes a calendar of events, continuing education opportunities, newsletters, blog headlines, scholarship applications, scholarship reports, governance information (meeting agendas, minutes), and organizational information (bylaws, policies, staff).

The webpage provides links to the electronic resources of the region including the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM), North Star Library Consortium catalog, regional public library catalogs, academic catalogs, and MnLINK.

The webpage also includes special pages devoted to the Spotlight on Books Conference and the North Star Library Consortium.

The NLLN webpage is well used and we have good documentation regarding who is visiting our webpage, where they are coming from, what they are looking at, how long they spend, etc. For fun, we have a “Site Meter” which allows any visitor to view the use of the webpage and a “Clustr Map” that shows where in the world people are who visit our webpage. So far, we have every continent but Australia represented on the Clustr Map.

Use of the webpage varies by the time of year. Jan-Apr was very high this year due to the participation in 23 Things on a Stick, the Spotlight on Books Conference, and changes being made to the North Star Library Consortium. On-line registration for our events is possible through the webpage and provides us with an easy way to collect and manage registrations. We do not have the ability to accept money via the web but have considered various options. To date, it is cost prohibitive given our small number of transactions that would take place.

Our **NLLN.org email** accounts are hosted at iPower and we have had little problem with any of their services. In addition to my nlln.org address I also have a gmail account that I can view my nlln.org mail, NLLN Office email account, and my personal account.

- Other electronic communication: the **Northern Lights Insights**, the NLLN blog, is hosted by WordPress, a free, high-quality, blog service (<http://northerninsights.wordpress.com>). Although there are few comments on any of the blog posts, over 6,600 "views" are recorded for the 138 posts. It is possible to subscribe to the blog by email or to receive it via an RSS feed and we have 28 subscribers.

We also have a **Flickr photogallery** (\$25/yr) which is linked to the webpage and the blog. This allows us to post pictures of happenings in the NLLN region and share them with the world. The Flickr gallery can be found at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/nlln/> . New pictures are added on a fairly regular basis and often posted on the blog as well. I would like to be able to post short videos on Flickr but have yet to figure out the format compatibility issue. I documented the day of the cancelled Annual Meeting and wanted to post that video along with the cancellation notice!

I use **Twitter**, (www.twitter.com) which is a free microblogging tool, to stay in contact with people all over the world. "Tweets" are only 140 characters in length, so messages are always very brief. You can use Twitter from a cell phone, via chat, or using the web – and it is quite fun. The Twitter posts have been interesting to read and I expect that more people in the NLLN region will begin using it as time goes on.

- **OPAL Webconferencing** (<http://www.opal-online.org/>) OPAL stands for Online Programming for All Libraries and is an inexpensive (\$500/yr) but effective way to do webconferencing and has been especially useful for taking the place of face-to-face meetings. NLLN has it's own OPAL room in which we meet or present. An added value of OPAL, independent of a subscription, is the ability to participate in the rich array of programming available directly, and for free, from OPAL and all the OPAL members. I regularly attend OPAL presentations and find them to be convenient, very high quality, informative, and diverse in nature. One can participate live, in real time, or visit the archive at a time of your own convenience. I hope to explore using OPAL for training or problem solving for the NSLC in the coming year, and will continue to use it for planning events and for short meetings. No driving required is the primary attraction; interactive and on the web is also an important feature.
- **North Star Library Consortium Wiki** - I set up a free wiki to use in the development of the North Star Library Consortium and the new E2T2 grant. It can be found at: <http://northstarlibraryconsortium.pbwiki.com/> . This allows all the main partners in this project (NLLN, CMLE, Region 1, Follett Sales, Follett Customer Rep, Trainers) to post information, to track the project, to edit information, and to collaborate on getting this project where it needs to go. It has been very handy to have the information in one web-based location for everyone to see rather than relying on long series of emails and attachments, or files on individual computers which are inaccessible to others.
- **Email, Telephone** – A toll free number allows easy access to the NLLN Office from anyone, anywhere. This is a convenience that is valued, and is not a great expense.

Email, of course, continues to be the primary means of one-on-one communication between the NLLN Office and the rest of the universe. rsojie@nlln.org; dkeena@nlln.org, and nloffice@nlln.org are our 3 email accounts.

Resource Sharing

- **Delivery Demonstration Projects:** In the past few years, we have seen a dramatic growth in the loaning/borrowing of Minnesota library materials, which has had a huge impact on the public library systems in our region. This has happened at the same time there has been both a gap and a shift in state funding available for the physical delivery of library materials. The fast growth of interlibrary loan began initially with the creation of MnLINK and accelerated with the MnLINK "Get it" button. At the same time, federal funds were discontinued for delivery, and there was a one year delay in the state's increased funding to public library systems which would help offset the loss of federal funds. NLLN's budget/work plan for FY2008 included money for Delivery Demonstration Projects. In response to our request for information about the demands being made on their delivery systems, the regional public library systems have responded with documentation about the current situation in their region. These reports will be reviewed by the Board and it is anticipated that each of the regional public library systems will be awarded \$5,000 in one-time funds to help bridge the funding gap and to encourage continued innovation in delivering library materials beyond their own branch library sites. NLLN discontinued direct funding of delivery in 2005.

- **North Star Library Consortium (NSLC):** The big news on this front is that our recent grant application for an Enhancing Education Through Technology (E2T2) was successful. It is in the amount of \$150,000.00. NLLN and the Central Minnesota Library Exchange (CMLE – our counterpart in the central part of MN) will be partners with Region 1 to expand the Consortium. There will be several major components of this grant and it will run from mid April 2008 to December 2009. We expect to expand the Consortium membership by 50 sites, and possibly by as much as 70-100 in the coming 18 months.

We conducted 2 information sessions in Alexandria and Foley for interested members and had good attendance at both. To date we have 6 or 7 districts (18 sites) committed to coming on immediately.

Two major activities will take place this summer: the existing Consortium will be migrated to a new software configuration during the month of June. This new configuration will allow much more autonomy for each participant school district.

Also this summer we will begin adding new members to the Consortium under the terms of the E2T2 grant. This will allow school districts in either the NLLN or the CMLE region to join the Consortium under very favorable pricing. We will add up to 20 sites this summer and will include 2-day Destiny training for each new site. Additional sites will be added in Dec 08 (20 sites) and summer of 09 (20 sites).

Staff development is a big part of the E2T2 grant. We will be offering a number of sessions this summer related to training on the new Consortium configuration and training for new members of the Consortium. We will also offer a Back to School Special, August 21, at Arrowwood Resort for all media center personnel, and have a number of staff development days throughout the year.

The Project is being coordinated through a wiki I set up to allow for online collaboration among all the many partner organizations.

- **Chris McArthur's work:** Chris will be working with several Consortium sites this summer on retrospective conversion and media center re-organization/clean up. She has worked with the Naytahwaush Charter School, will be working with the Clearbrook-Gonvick District, Leech Lake Early Childhood Programs, and some consulting work with Leech Lake Tribal College. Chris is also doing numerous other related projects and it is wonderful to have her time, as well as her experience, to assist Consortium members.
- **Destiny:** We will convert the existing Consortium software to a new "consortium" configuration in June and will upgrade the Destiny software to ver 8.5 in early July. Both steps will produce some nice new functionality for our members. Both will require training.
- **CatExpress:** The NLLN Group Subscription for CatExpress is being examined and updated before renewal in June. NLLN has underwritten the cost of a CatExpress subscription for those libraries that are not part of a MnLINK Gateway site. The purpose of this subscription is to provide high quality cataloging in the shared catalogs of our region.

OTHER: On May 29th, Deb came to the office to find that a hot water pipe in the ceiling above my desk had broken and that it was "raining" inside our office. She acted quickly to get assistance and we suffered little damage or loss. Fortunately the ceiling tiles absorbed most of the water before it began dripping onto equipment and desks. We were able to move or cover things before the tiles were removed and the leak was exposed – a hot water shower! The entire building's water supply had to be drained before repair could begin. It was dramatic, but fortunately, did not cause serious damage. The carpet was cleaned and dried over the weekend allowing us to return on Monday to move things back into place and to clean up the remaining mess.

Ruth Solie
June 21, 2008