

Northern Lights Library Network

Director's Report August 21, 2010

Meetings/Events

June

June 19 NLLN Governing Board meeting, Detroit Lakes
June 22 Pick up Mn Book Award nominees for distribution, St Paul
June 30 Debra Keena's performance review

July

July 1 Planning meeting with Follett personnel for school year 2010-11,
Alexandria, MN
July 2-9 In Montana. My father passed away July 6.
July 13 Multitype directors' meeting, St Paul
July 20 MLA/MEMO Legislative Forum, St Cloud
July 21 White Earth Child Care Destiny training, Mahnomon, via webinar
July 26 ALA Webinar on Public Library Funding and Technology Access Report
July 27 Installation of new office computers
July 27 ALA Tech Trends from ALA Conference, webinar
July 29 Pick up of final Mn Book Award nominees for distribution, St Paul
July 30 Webpage update

August

August 2 Installation of printer/scanner/fax on new office computers
August 9-10 NLLN FY 2010 audit begun
August 21 NLLN Governing Board Meeting

Narrative

This summer has gone by incredibly quickly, partially due to the amount of time that I have been out of the office and the anticipated time I will be gone. In early May I was in Montana to be with my parents over Mother's Day, and then returned in early July due to my father's sudden decline. He passed away quite peacefully in his sleep at the age of 94 on July 6. His family was all with him and my siblings and I, along with my mother and friends, had the opportunity to celebrate his life and death together. We continue to support my mother, also 94, who deeply misses her partner of more than 70 years. We will have a memorial service over the Labor Day weekend at their mountain home in western Montana.

In addition to having my younger daughter with me in Detroit Lakes over the summer and spending some time with my 1 yr old granddaughter in Minneapolis, my older daughter is planning to relocate, with her husband and 2 huskies, from Costa Rica to the US. Ultimately they plan to live in the Denver or Minneapolis area, but will start off with some time in northern Minnesota while finding employment, a place to live, and getting moved. I look forward to spending some time with them exploring Minnesota and adjusting to life in the U.S.

This is all to say that I have been out of the office for family matters several times this summer, but I continue to keep things afloat in NLLN as best I can. Ubiquitous internet access helps a great deal! Supportive colleagues and staff are invaluable.

Here are the highlights of July/August activities:

North Star Library Consortium:

- ◆ We are now up to 205 members, mostly school libraries with a few academic and special libraries. The Consortium continues to grow at a steady rate.
- ◆ The majority (166) of the 205 are from the NLLN region are mostly very small districts with small student populations. 81% of the total sites are in NLLN.
- ◆ The Consortium has members from 6 of the 7 multitype regions (and 11 of the 12 regional public library systems). Southeast Minnesota is the only area that does not have in the NSLC. The opportunity to participate in the Consortium is available statewide to school districts anywhere and of any size.
- ◆ The fact that the Destiny software is hosted at Region 1 in Moorhead means that local school districts do not have to maintain the software, provide the technical support, or perform the backup and upgrade functions. This makes membership very appealing.
- ◆ Consortium pricing also makes membership financially attractive.
- ◆ We met with representatives from Follett for our annual Consortium review and update. Pricing will hold steady for the coming year and promotion of the Consortium will be extended more vigorously in the metro region. Also, Follett will be promoting various additional Destiny modules that are available to Consortium members (Text book and Asset manager among others) and introducing new software (Cognite). Follett will be available at the Fall MEMO Conference to demo products and promote participation in the North Star Library Consortium.
- ◆ The White Earth Child Care Readmobile has undergone some recent updates and is hoping to expand their services in the coming year using the Destiny system for circulation and reporting functions.
- ◆ We will be presenting information about the advantages of hosted software and Consortium economies of scale at the Fall MEMO Conference.
- ◆ We will be making a stronger effort in the in the metro region to recruit smaller public school districts as well as private schools for membership.
- ◆ We had an in-depth introduction to Follett's newest product, Cognite, which is an information portal available to students, teachers, parents, and administrators. It works with the student information system and integrates with curriculum, assessment, lesson plans, grades as well as provide access to all the digital content of the district.

White Earth Early Childhood Initiative/White Earth Child Care (WECC) Program/National Indian Child Care Association/Reach Out and Read:

- ◆ Early childhood activities are thriving on the White Earth Reservation and we have been working with them regarding early literacy programs for licensed child care providers and to Family, Friend and Neighbor childcare providers.
- ◆ These programs have received national recognition and I would like to work more directly with them to continue to enhance their programming. I would also like to help with the acquisition of more books, more training, and implementation of software to help them with reports and record keeping.
- ◆ Barb Fabre, WECC, is national chair of the National Indian Child Care Association. They would like to publish a book on cradleboards and cradle baskets representing members of the 500 tribes in their association. I have been working with Barb, Gretchen Wronka (Hennepin Co Library), Lynne Burke (MN Reach out and Read), and Deborah Shine (Star Bright) a New York publisher. We plan to meet, in person, in September in Detroit Lakes. We will discuss the book publication and attend a special event related to Kids Count! – the annual report from the Children's Defense Fund. This year White Earth Child Care is featured as a "star of the state". This is all very exciting.

- ◆ Lynne Burke would like to explore the possibility of extending the Reach out and Read program in Becker County and I offered to help facilitate a meeting with the various community partners. This will include health care providers, libraries, early childhood programs, child care providers, and others. This is a significant and beneficial program. If established in Becker County, this would be the first county-wide program in Minnesota. Grant funds are available to provide children with books, as prescribed by their doctor at well-baby visits. We have done similar programs in the past, but this is a great opportunity to invest once again in dynamic partnerships that support young children and early literacy.

Continuing Education/Professional Development

- ◆ We will not be having a “Back to School” workshop for members of the North Star Library Consortium for a number of reasons and are encouraging attendance at the Fall MEMO Conference where Follett will be present and the North Star Library Consortium will be featured.
- ◆ We will present at the MEMO Fall Conference on the Consortium and participate in the Destiny Users’ Group there.
- ◆ We will provide 2 basic Destiny workshops for anyone who needs training on use of the software or who is new to a Destiny library site. These will take place early in the school year. One will be done by webinar on a partial cost-recovery basis (\$35/person); the other will be via live trainer and will be a full day at a cost of \$50/person.
- ◆ We will be supporting the History Day @ your library activities and consider having something similar in our area.
- ◆ We will plan for ELM workshops throughout the region for school and/or public library staff. There are some new student interfaces from one of the vendors we would like to highlight.
- ◆ We will continue to promote use of our CE Scholarships throughout the region.
- ◆ We will expand the Spotlight on Books Conference this year
- ◆ We will partner with others in the region for special events (F-M Libraries/Stephen Abrams?)
- ◆ We will provide, if available, teleconferences from DuPage in partnership with Minitex. We will promote only the desktop webstreaming option this year due to low attendance at the in-person teleconference site at MSUM Livingston Lord Library this past year.

Legislative Forum/Library Future Initiative

- ◆ The MLA/MEMO Legislative Forum was held in St Cloud on July 20. The day looked at current funding for each major group in the MN library community. We also discussed the future of State Library Services, the Office of the Legislative Auditor Report on Public Library Funding, position of State Librarian, and the Library Futures Initiative.
- ◆ The legislative platform will be developed over the coming weeks/months and will most likely support current levels of funding. Bonding issues may be included this session, and if so, we will include a request for library construction funding that was vetoed last session.
- ◆ The enormous state deficit - \$6 billion and still counting – gives everyone pause. Cuts, shifts, and delays are no longer options to produce major reductions. It is probably time now to begin eliminating full programs. LGA/County Aid will likely disappear. What will happen with libraries remains to be seen.
- ◆ A great deal depends on the outcome of the November election. Although we cannot wait until January to create our platform or refine our positions, the solutions sought by the new governor and the legislature will be defined by the outcome of the election.
- ◆ The Library Futures Initiative has begun to solicit applications for participants in that exciting undertaking. There is strong, but not universal, support of the younger members of our profession (ages 25-35) in this undertaking to think about the future of Minnesota libraries. NLLN has committed to supporting those younger professionals in our area who have submitted applications. We will do this with our Professional Engagement Funds

program as well as Special Project funds. We encourage librarians of all ages to participate in some way in this undertaking.

Special Projects/Professional Engagement Funds

- ◆ We have funded 3 Professional Engagement Fund opportunities in FY2011 already!
- ◆ I anticipate that we will see more requests for these funds as people take on work of the profession but find institutional support increasingly scarce.
- ◆ We will use Professional Engagement Funds to support any participants from our area in the Library Futures Initiative and may dedicate some Special Project Funds to help underwrite the overall costs of the LFI.
- ◆ We will submit an NLLN Special Project proposal for the National Indian Child Care Association book publication and distribution.
- ◆ Also an NLLN Special Project proposal for work with the Becker County Reach Out and Read program.

Scenarios for hiring a new NLLN Executive Director

- ◆ We are back where we were 2 years ago when thinking about hiring additional professional staff : it is difficult to know if it is either wise or possible to recruit a new director in a time of great uncertainty about the organization's future.
- ◆ I think we need to go ahead with the process. If at any time it becomes necessary to abandon it, we can do that. We cannot wait until next May to think about how to replace the Director.
- ◆ A separate document will be provided with possible steps in the process. The Board will then be able to decide how to move forward.

Miscellaneous:

- ◆ We have purchased and installed 2 new desktop computers from Dell for the Office use. We have not quite decided what to do with the monitors (good) or CPU's (bad) yet. We have several options for the monitors and will probably discard the CPU's due to their limited usefulness. We have a little more tweaking to do to make everything work smoothly on our office network but it is a pleasure to have updated software and fast new computers!
- ◆ I picked up 30-some boxes of books from the Minnesota Book Awards program. These will be distributed to NLLN member libraries. I'm looking for suggestions on how to distribute these most efficiently. We will probably pull some of the young adult and adult fiction, as well as non-fiction for donation to the Wadena High School Library.

**Ruth Solie
August 2010**