

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2007/2008

**Candy Herbert
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I returned from PLA with many handouts, notes, free books and excited about the new ideas and fresh approaches found in public libraries today, all great reasons for attending. “Great Libraries for Dummies” was an especially good session (in spite of the title) and I find myself thinking about how to incorporate at least some of the ideas suggested. The speaker was from a Canadian library which has won awards for their efforts. The overview included major trends in libraries, a list of “must-do’s” and five easy steps to get started. Major emphasis is put on our customers, not the staff. Most customers want to be self-reliant, to be able to browse to find what they want, to self-checkout, etc. This frees up the staff to produce programming and value-added products. Frequent surveys of both customers and staff and branch library comparisons are needed to keep on track. This library’s circulation increased by about 30%.
Wow!

Two sessions on teen issues concerned teen spaces in the library and teen reference. Our lack of teen space is a need we want to address in our expansion plans. There were many ideas addressed and time for questions from the audience. A panel of teens did a nice job and it was amusing to learn that they did not realize they were attending a conference and expected a small group –not more than 9,000 librarians!

The Frommer’s Luncheon was great fun and informative about travel trends and suggestions. Both father and daughter were charming and they took questions for the audience.

“Technozoo” was yet another nudge to expect great changes and possibilities in technology communication which will impact our library customers and what they will expect from us. The speaker feels that the capabilities and possibilities are growing so fast, that we are only on the edge of what will be possible using the internet. He claims the technology is already way ahead of how we have learned to apply and use its power.

I’m a lover of mysteries, and loved having the chance to hear some of my favorite authors talk about how they began writing and about their newest books.

Lastly, the exhibitors were in full force with over 800 vendors available. It took some effort to find time in between sessions to browse through the aisles and take time to speak with some about their products.

Thank you so much for the scholarship to make it possible for me to attend. I’ve been a reference librarian for 30 years, and this is the first time I have attended this great convention.

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