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From October 12 to October 14, 2011 I attended the MLA 2011 Annual Conference which was held at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth, Minnesota. This was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet and interact with other librarians from around the state. I also got to go to many sessions where I received tons of information on books, board games, tools for a better Summer Reading Program that I will be able to use in future programming and book ordering.

I went to three sessions on books that would be a good asset to my collection. The first one was on Graphic Novels. I have a passing knowledge of Graphic Novels, so it was great to get a list of 42 books that would be highly suggested to have in a collection. The presentation was broken into age groups. There were books suggested for adults, teens and kids. This was a great session as graphic novels are exploding in popularity.

The second session that I went to that was on books dealt with books for kids and teens. The three presenters did a wonderful job selecting books that would be good for book clubs, great non-fiction, and books that are not part of a series. This was very helpful for me. This summer I ran a teen book club and was mildly successful. It was nice to have some title recommendations that have worked for other book clubs. Secondly, I am not a big reader of non-fiction and it is a struggle to find non-fiction that is going to be of high interest to young readers. Lastly, there is a trend right now in junior and young adult books to have every book be part of a series. It is getting really hard to find books that are stand alone. It was nice to know that they do exist and they are good books worthy of having in a collection.

The third session on books that I went to had books from 5 different categories; Nordic Crime, Science Fiction/Fantasy, Contemporary Women Writers, Young Adult, and Paranormal. While my title is Children and Teen Librarian, I still spend a fair amount of time interacting with adult patrons. Having a basic understanding of what is 'hot' in adult fiction is always helpful when doing readers advisory.

A fun and very informational session was a session on board games. Every September through May I run teen events in my library and am always looking for activities to keep my teens engaged and coming back. This session was "book talks" on board, dice and card games that are of interest to teens. I will definitely be looking at some of these games and seeing about adding them to my libraries games collection.

The session on the Summer Reading Program was probably the most helpful session for me as a new librarian. This last summer was my first experience with a summer reading program. At this session I learned a multitude of tools to help my next summer reading program be more successful. The presenters talked about why there are goals and objectives

and how to successfully create and fulfill them. They also talked about incentives and some of their successes at finding a way to measure fulfillment of the program for the children to receive incentives. Finally they talked about ways to get local businesses to support the Summer Reading program, either by sponsoring an incentive, or donating various types of prizes. I walked away from this presentation with a huge amount of information that I am excited to try next summer with my Summer Reading Program.

Being able to go to the MLA Conference was definitely a boon for me as a first year librarian. I learned so much and will definitely be using what I learned at this conference in my library in various ways.