

Northern Lights Library Network Governing Board

Director's Report Dec 15, 2007

Meetings/Activities

October

- Oct 23 Multitype Directors meeting for 23 Things on a Stick, Mankato
- Oct 26 Soaring to Excellence, "Finding Trends that Matter", teleconference
- Oct 24-26 MN Library Association Annual Conference, Mankato
- Oct 29 Media Center Staff workshop, NW Service Coop, Thief River Falls
- Oct 29 MEMO NW Regional meeting, Thief River Falls
- Oct 31 Installation/training for new photocopier (!)

November

- Nov 5 Planning meeting for 23 Things – OPAL conferencing
- Nov 14 National Family, Friend and Neighbor Conference Call
- Nov 19 Planning meeting for 23 Things – OPAL conferencing
- Nov 22-23 Thanksgiving Holiday – Office Closed
- Nov 26 Training meeting on OPAL software with MINITEX
- Nov 29 Planning meeting for North Star Library Consortium, St Cloud
- Nov 30 MINITEX Policy Advisory Council meeting, U of M, Minneapolis

December

- Dec 3 Interview with MPR (Dan Gunderson), telephone
- Dec 4 Multitype directors interim meeting, OPAL Conferencing
- Dec 5 WebJunction forum on Personal Learning Experiences – WIMBA conferencing
- Dec 6 Meeting with Erika Ruk and Brenda Hough, Fargo
- Dec 10 Training session with Leech Lake Early Childhood, Cass Lake
- Dec 10 Training session with Leech Lake Tribal College
- Dec 11 Ready4K Board meeting, telephone conference
- Dec 15 NLLN Governing Board Meeting

Continuing Education

Media Center Staff Workshop, NLLN partnered with Alice Hoftstad (Northwest Service Cooperative, Thief River Falls) to present the Fall workshop for media center staff. I did several presentations on NLLN services and CE opportunities. 25 people attended and it was a good workshop followed by a MEMO Regional meeting to consider the MEMO Midwinter Conference.

Soaring to Excellence: Finding the Trends that Matter: Getting your Environmental Scan On, 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.

OPAL training: We have used the OPAL webconferencing software primarily for meetings as we plan the “23 Things on a Stick” project, but have trained a number of people, including the MINITEX staff and director, on using OPAL. I have sought out training for myself on how better to use this software. It is frequently updated, giving it more functionality, the most recent being the ability to participate in conferencing events without downloading and installing the small software plugin. Having web-based access to OPAL will be particularly useful for Mac computer users, those behind firewalls, anyone needing IT staff to load the plugin, and possibly for those using dialup access. The web-based version does not provide for the “voice over IP” which means participants can hear and see everything and do text chat, but they can not participate via the audio.

NLLN Scholarship program: We continue to receive a steady stream of requests from public library staff to attend the Public Library Association National Conference which will be held in Minneapolis, March, 2008. This is such a wonderful opportunity that we hope that many staff members, trustees, and Friends will be able to attend some or all of this Conference; NLLN Scholarships will certainly make it possible for many to attend who might not otherwise be able to afford it. Scholarship reports for FY 2008 are being posted on the NLLN webpage.

Spotlight on Books 2008: Planning continues for the 20th Annual Spotlight on Books Conference. It will be great! Featured on Friday afternoon will be Jim Trelease of “Read Aloud” fame; Saturday will feature DJ McHale, Mary Casanova, and Debra Frasier, as well as displays, “showcases”, and authors from past years’ conferences. The NLLN webpage for Spotlight has been updated and the promotional materials are being created for early distribution.

23 Things on a Stick: The multitype directors will be launching a statewide initiative in January called, “23 Things on a Stick – a Library Learning 2.0 Program”. This self-paced program of discovery will allow library staff from all types of libraries (as well as trustees, Friends, and anyone with an interest) to learn more about such Web 2.0 tools as blogs, wikis, flickr, RSS, social networking, and much more. Planning for this has been very time and labor intensive but it is an exciting project. Across the state there has been much interest generated by this project – I hope the NLLN Board members will want to participate in this project and receive the prize for completion.

2008 Annual Meeting: Preliminary planning is underway for the annual meeting which will be held April 26, 2008. We will be celebrating those who have completed the “23 Things on a Stick” program and plan on a program focused on “personal learning environments” to encourage everyone to be lifelong learners – and to learn more about the tools and strategies to do this easily and efficiently. The Board will be asked for additional input on the Annual meeting program.

Advocacy

MLA/MEMO Legislative Platform: The MLA Legislative Committee is changing its meeting date in January. My participation in monthly meetings has been limited the past 2 years due to a standing conflict with the meeting date. I anticipate with the meeting date change that I will be able to attend more of the monthly meetings. The proposed platform is nearly complete and focuses primarily on bonding issues and government aid to cities and counties. A draft platform will be distributed at our meeting.

Ready4K: The Ready4K Board is developing its legislative policy for the upcoming session but will also be gearing up for the 2009 legislative budget session. The plan is to continue building on the successful work done during the 2007 session. R4K has been doing strategic planning the past few months with particular attention to more effectively reaching Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers. Libraries are seen as a key community agency for access to a wide variety of resources. There has been discussion about initiating a statewide program for FFN providers involving libraries as community resource centers.

Mn Book Award Program 2008: The deadline for nominations for this year's Book Awards has come but there is still time for judges to apply. Again, we hope to coordinate a traveling display of books related to the nominated books. The Book Award Celebration will be April 12, 2008, in St Paul.

Communication

Webpage enhancements: The NLLN webpage is an ongoing process. The Continuing Education page, and Spotlight on Books continue to be the most heavily used areas and require the most maintenance. In Oct we had 1062 visits (537 unique visitors) to the website and 934 visits (529 unique visitors) in November. The number, type, duration, pages viewed etc is all reported and it is clear that use of the webpage is directly linked to activities in the library community, particularly those sponsored by NLLN.

Blog: The NLLN blog, *Northern Lights Insights*, is the primary mechanism for disseminating information to the region. New posts are published frequently on a wide range of topics of interest to the NLLN region. The number of other sites linking to the blog continues to grow (it is on the Mn WebJunction blogroll and is incorporated into the "23 Things" project). Readers may go directly to the blog, link from the NLLN website, subscribe by email to receive new posts, or use an RSS feed. To date there have been 110 posts published and it has had 3835 "views" (people looking at the blog). The most views in one day was 53 – and that does not include any access to the blog that comes from the NLLN office! I anticipate that the 23 Things project will be one way of increasing awareness of the blog and perhaps stimulate greater interaction/comments from readers.

Listservs: The NLLN listserv has 135 subscribers; it is a low volume list that is used primarily to share time-sensitive information to the NLLN membership via email. The North Star Library Consortium electronic mailing list has 102 subscribers. This is a more active email discussion and is open only to staff in the North Star Library Consortium and to Follett sales, training, and tech staff. Members use it to ask questions, share tips, and support one another in the use of Destiny and in media center management.

Photogallery: The NLLN photogallery on the NLLN webpage (a Flickr account) has new pictures posted all the time. People seem to enjoy that and look at them. More publicity could be given to these photos.

Photocopier: We have installed and received training on our new photocopier. This equipment is certainly state-of-the-art and includes a number of wonderful functions, including the ability to do scanning to email/network, high quality color photocopy on demand, and sophisticated printing processes for booklets, brochures, broadsides, etc. Deb and I received training on the use of this machine.

Resource Sharing

North Star Library Consortium (NSLC): Chris McArthur and I spent a day in Cass Lake working with the Leech Lake Early Childhood Programs and the Leech Lake Tribal

College. The Tribal College is preparing to migrate their records to Destiny and the childcare program is preparing for retrospective conversion. Chris and I were able to help get the Child Care program collection barcoded in anticipation of adding the volumes once Destiny is set up for them. Training for these two newest members and new staff in other sites will take place in January.

Follett discussions: We continue to have lengthy, but fairly unproductive, conversations with the Follett company regarding the costs/benefits of moving the NSLC to the Follett "Consortium Model". Although there are advantages to this, the costs are not clear so it is difficult to determine if the benefit is worth the expense. Although we have talked with the libraries of the Central Minnesota Exchange who might be interested in forming a Consortium similar to the NSLC, or perhaps working with us on a new consortium, Follett has not been responsive and it is unlikely that we will be able to move ahead with this.

Chris McArthur's work: Chris has been doing a great deal of support work with all the members of the NSLC. I find that I am not able to answer the nitty gritty questions that arise every day and rely on Chris to keep members informed, trouble shoot for them, and provide a wide array of services/support. The Waubun School district has been most generous in providing occasional release time for Chris to assist the member libraries that need retrospective conversion or who do not have the services of a trained librarian at their site. Chris has also done troubleshooting with Region 1 and Follett over catalog search delays that mysteriously occur at some sites.

Destiny: We will be upgrading to version 8.0 in December over the winter break. We will investigate effective ways to help all Destiny users in the NLLN region use the new version most effectively.

Other:

Computer issues: My computer has outlived its extended warranty and is beginning to show the ravages of time. For several weeks I could not use my desk top computer due to hard drive failure and security issues. Earlier the motherboard on this computer had been replaced. Although I chose to replace the hard drive and to invest in an external backup system, it may be time to consider purchasing new computers for Deb and me. Our computers are the same age, make, and model – when one starts behaving poorly, the other usually follows. The recommendation to me by a trusted tech support person was to buy new rather than putting a lot of money into an aging and outdated system. We will discuss this with the Board.

**Ruth Solie
Dec 15, 2007**