

## **Executive Director's Column**

By Adam Wright, Executive Director, NTRLS.  
April, 2008

Happy April!

Here is an interesting quote from the December 19, 2007 issue of US News and World Report where they ranked the best careers for 2008.

*Forget about that image of librarian as a mousy bookworm. Librarians these days must be high-tech information sleuths, helping researchers plumb the oceans of information available in books and digital records. It's an underrated career. Most librarians love helping patrons dig up information and, in the process, learning new things. Librarians may also go on shopping sprees, deciding which books and online resources to buy. They even get to put on performances, like children's puppet shows, and run other programs, like book discussion groups for elders. On top of it all, librarians' work hours are reasonable. (<http://www.usnews.com/articles/business/best-careers/2007/12/19/librarian-executive-summary.html>)*

I thought this quote is appropriate for our theme this month, which is “*Growing in the Library Profession.*” We have another guest writer, Dr. Arlita Harris from the University of North Texas, who tells us how we can grow to become great bosses. For our Librarian Live episode, I interviewed Katherine Boyer, Director at the Roanoke Public Library, about how to be a great library director.

Our intention this month is to acknowledge the library profession and how one can still make a career out of the profession. In April, we celebrate National Library Week and the Texas Library Association holds its annual conference. With all this in mind, our theme seems very fitting.

When I decided to go into the library profession in the nineties, it was my last ditch attempt at finding a career for an English major that did not involve teaching. I was hesitating at the time, because I did not fit the typical librarian profile. How could I fit into Libraryland? I found out very quickly that Librarians were very inclusive and I was accepted right away.

Now that I am a librarian, I have been pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoy the job and the profession. I whole-heartedly agree with US News and World Report that Librarianship is an underrated career. Most people outside of Libraryland do not realize the sophistication of the librarian culture and how enriching it can be. Are there problems and issues we need to work through? Oh, yes!!! I will not deny that we face some difficult decisions and times ahead of us, but I see no reason for librarianship to not continue as a top-notch career choice. I love being a librarian and hope to continue in this profession until I retire at 85!

## **April Workshops**

Here are the workshops we are offering this month! You can register for these workshops at <http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=160>.

**Genealogy**, 4/3/2008, System Office

**Genealogy**, 4/4/2008, Lewisville Public Library

**Leading Through the Fog: Negotiating, Decision Making and Ethics**, 4/7/2008, Decatur Public Library

**Leading Through the Fog: Negotiating, Decision Making and Ethics**, 4/8/2008,  
Grapevine Public Library

**Rules, Roles and the Coming Revolution: Rethinking Our Libraries**, 4/10/2008,  
Southlake Public Library

### **Shared Integrated Library System (SILS)**

NTRLS submitted a Texas State and Library Archives Commission (TSLAC) Cooperation Grant on March 14<sup>th</sup>. The grant asked for \$75,000 to help the 15 participating libraries offset the first year project costs. We should know the results in August. Please keep your fingers crossed for us!

### **NTRLS @ Your Library**

NTRLS closed the office on March 12<sup>th</sup> and went to the Roanoke Public Library to help them shift some of their collection around. We started by weeding and moving their reference collection. We then moved the entire teen section to the former home of the reference section. It took us all day and we were exhausted at the end. Katherine Boyer, director of the library, mentioned to us in passing that she felt she had been visited by Extreme Makeover: Library Edition. I can think of no better compliment. Our final NTRLS @ Your Library day of the year is scheduled for June 11, 2008. Member libraries have until May 5 to apply.

You can do it at <http://www.ntrls2.org/default.asp?action=article&ID=276>

### **Libraries for Literacy**

As I have written in the past, I have never been involved in a cause that has brought such a divergent set of people together. Libraries for Literacy seems to be a project that many different people can rally behind. We have applied for a TSLAC System Competitive Grant to help fund a coordinator position and seed literacy endeavors in three of our communities. We have requested just under \$60,000 and included 24 letters of support with the grant application. I was most pleased. In addition, I briefly met with Hip Hop Artist **Cutta C** about adopting literacy as his cause. If everything plays out as I hope, you will soon be hearing some rap songs about literacy.

### **Special Needs Project**

Our third and final grant was for our Special Needs project. We applied for the TSLAC Special Project grant in the amount of just over \$70,000. We hope to fund a coordinator position for the project as well as seed some special needs fairs in several of our communities.

Regardless of the outcome of this grant application, we are seriously considering making special needs a priority in the next three years. To better understand what should be done, we will be working with the Fort Worth Public Library in setting up a special needs section for their downtown library. Hopefully, we will learn some best practices from this consulting work that will assist other libraries in their efforts in reaching out to their special needs sectors.

I hope to see everyone at the TLA conference in Dallas!!! I will be there so keep an eye out for me and come say hi!!