

## **Executive Director's Column: Notes from a Binge Thinker**

By Adam Wright, Executive Director, North Texas Library Partners

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Happy Fourth of July!

Our website theme this month is eBooks! Currently, this is one of my favorite subjects. In fact, I enjoy this topic so much that I am planning on a workshop in the fall entitled, "eBook Readers for Every Citizen: What eBooks mean to your library."

For my column this month, I am going to explore how we fit in serving the youth of our communities.

People often ask me how I ended up in the library world. After all, I do not match the typical librarian stereotype. I am a white male married with two wonderful kids. How did I ever end up as a librarian?

It deals directly with my experiences in the Southeast branch of the Arlington Public Library System (now called the East Arlington Branch) The house where I grew up was only a fifteen minute walk from the library and I found myself going to the library on a regular basis to check out books. Of course, my favorite books to check out were the baseball biographies. It was during this time that I learned about Bob Feller, Babe Ruth, Carl Hubbard and Hank Aaron. My love of the game, which has only increased in the last five years, started here and without the library I probably would have never discovered my passion. In essence, it was my experience as a child that drove my love of libraries so when the time came for me to choose a career; it was not difficult for me.

Libraries are daily inspiring children and youth. I think this will continue as we move into the next decade. In fact, I think our role of serving the community youth will only grow. Here are some of my insights into the question, "Serving the Youth, where do we fit in."

1. Libraries will continue to evolve their children and youth services to be more technologically based. The younger generations of today have never known a world without the Internet, cell phones and video games. In order to attract these youths, the library will need to offer services that use these technology tools. "We need to offer the items that each community deems important. We will always have a part of our patrons that only want the traditional book, but we need to be "an educated consumer" as we are the purchase agents of items that are new and upcoming. We have to spend our tax revenue and other monies wisely, and yet, be abreast of the technology of books that are on the cutting edge. As the preschooler and toddler generation that we serve today grows up, eBooks will likely be "the standard" as they get into high school and college. We need to have open communication with our patrons and try to buy the items that they

want us to have for each demographic area” Debbie Randall, Children’s Librarian at the John Ed Keeter Public Library in Saginaw, wrote to me in an email.

2. Despite what we think, most youth do care about facts and want to make sure what they are reading is the truth. As information becomes even more accessible over the Internet, youth are force fed information over the Internet to the point where it is not productive. Libraries need to step forward and help these children understand how to evaluate information and filter through the trash to find the true facts. Debbie agrees with me. “Kids get more savvy with each decade with the constant updating and sophistication of information on the internet highway. Their expectations are very high as a visual and "hands on" generation and this keeps being the case. They want to see the information for themselves, not just accept the fact that it is fact. This, in turn, challenges their creativity and curiosity, which lead to future questions and probing for answers.”

3. Storytime and Summer Reading Programs will continue to play a large role in our youth service offerings. Even with the technology development, storytime will still find value in the minds of the parents and guardians who appreciate a unique learning experience for their children. Rodney Bland, Director of the Burleson Public Library, sees that librarians will need to learn new ways to visually stimulate children during storytime. “Entertaining children who have had so much visual stimulation, not to mention the hands-on computer opportunities and the like will affect how each child reacts in the library and in story times. With this advent of the person as an individual who uses computers much more, texts much more, and has all of this stimulation, how will the Librarian manage to keep their attention. Or perhaps the uniqueness of the group story time will intrigue and still be viable.”

4. Children and Youth Librarians will need to continue to train themselves on the latest trends and technologies. Here at NTLP, we realize the value in this and it is one reason we host a regional themed conference for Children and Youth Librarians every August. In order to keep up with youth, we can never stop learning. “I hate to sound like a broken record, but librarians need to make sure that they are familiar with (and use) the same technologies that are used by older elementary kids, tweens, and teens. In addition, more librarians in Texas need to learn to speak Spanish and develop Spanish-language collections for their young patrons (where appropriate and possible).” Jesse Ephraim, Director of the Roanoke Public Library, wrote to me.

5. Video games are not the enemy. In fact, I think they might offer us a new way to promote literacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. My son is a great example. He learned to read so he could read what his characters were saying on one of his video games. Since then, he has excelled at reading and reads at least one book a week. Libraries need to embrace how children are learning today and focus their services on it.

I want to thank everyone who responded to my questions. I am not a children's librarian by trade so their insights were very welcomed. I do have two children though, so I can definitely relate to what they wrote. Youth of today are smart, savvy, and do care about their communities. Libraries can be one of their guides like it was for me when I needed one as a child.

Next month, I will be tackling the question, "Lifelong learners, what do they need from the public library?"

Now, here are some things going on around the System.

### **July Workshops**

Register for these workshops at <http://www.ntrls.org/ce/>. If the course is full, let us know if you want to be put on a waiting list.

- Texas Workskills Development in Libraries, 7/16/2010, Denton Public Library - North Branch Lab
- NEW DATE - Friday Night Kick-Off for North Texas Conference for Library Supporters , 7/23/2010, Decatur Civic Center
- NEW DATE - North Texas Conference for Library Supporters, 7/24/2010, Decatur Civic Center

### **Consulting**

Here are some consulting activities that took place in May.

#### **Region 1**

Paducah - Summer Reading and Budget

#### **Region 2**

Alvord – Grant Opportunities

#### **Region 3**

Sanger - Met with patron for library interview for podcast

#### **Region 4**

Saginaw - True Colors for Teen Program

#### **Region 6**

Fort Worth – Strategic Planning

#### **Region 7**

Alvarado – Summer Reading and Pet Food Campaign

### **Other Misc Activities**

- TWDL – 17 TWDL classes taught in June with over 150 in attendance
- Overdrive – working with committee online to change name of webpage and eBook purchase policies
- Phone meeting with Mark from Dulcinea about information literacy
- Attended Interagency meeting on Literacy in Austin
- NTLF placed and received the order for Self-Guided Workforce Literacy Material under TWDL and delivered the material to the participating libraries

### **Website and Internet Support for NTRLS Programs and Services**

- Regular updates to NTRLS.org website
- Website support for TechNet, Library Supporters, CYC and LP3 Conferences
- Administration for NTRLS-supported listservs
- Made preparations for migrating NTRLS website to new technology platform

### **Plinkit**

- Assistance to existing Plinkit projects and training for librarians at 6 libraries

### **North Texas Library Consortium (Evergreen)**

- Technical and administrative support for North Texas Library Consortium project
- Served as NTLC's and Equinox's contact point with TSLAC and OCLC for ILL Pilot
- Trained 2 librarians in Evergreen Reporting and provided 7 custom Evergreen report templates
- Handled and/or tracked 24 support issues
- Posted resource materials to NTLC website
- Attended meeting of NTLC Technology Committee

### **General**

- Support for Librarian Live project
- Regular updates to Overdrive barcodes for participating libraries in Overdrive Consortium
- Technical support to 4 libraries for Overdrive authentication
- General technology assistance to NTRLS office, including preparations for technology changes connected with office reconfiguration
- Attended System Assembly and 2010 Award Ceremony
- Attended NTRLS Board of Directors meeting and gave presentation

### Libraries Served by the Technology Consultant

<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Project</i>
Alvarado	7	NTLC	Kennedale	5	NTLC
Aubrey	3	NTLC	Keller	4	Overdrive
Azle	6	Overdrive	Krum	3	NTLC, Plinkit
Benbrook	6	Plinkit	Lake Cities	3	NTLC, Plinkit
Bowie	2	Plinkit	Mineral Wells	6	NTLC
Bridgeport	2	NTLC	Ponder	3	NTLC
Burleson	7	Overdrive	Roanoke	3	NTLC
Crowley	5	NTLC	Saginaw	4	Overdrive, NTLC
Decatur	2	NTLC	Sanger	3	NTLC
Graham		Overdrive	Stephenville	7	Plinkit
Jacksboro		Plinkit	Wichita Falls	1	Overdrive
Justin	3	NTLC			

### Libraries for Literacy

NTLP added the three online workshops on adult literacy program administration to the Libraries for Literacy website. Enrollment for these workshops is through July 19, and they must be completed by August 14 to receive CE/CPE credit. The content of the workshops will continue to be available after August 14 for those who have enrolled, regardless of whether they complete the workshops.

### Special Interest Groups & Conferences

- LibrarySupportersNetwork SIG <http://www.librarysupportersnetwork.com>  
*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual North Texas Conference for Library Supporters & Friday Night Kick-Off Dinner Presentation (Your Library's Guide to Surviving & Thriving in the 21st Century - featuring Anita Duckor, President of Duckor & Associates, Inc.)* ★ July 23-24 ★ **The Future of Libraries** ★ ALL at Decatur Civic Center

The schedule has been tweaked as needed to accommodate the change of facility, and adjustments have been made for session leaders who can't participate on the new date. A reminder/announcement has been sent out via email, and new registrations have been coming in daily. A link from the SIG website has been added, connecting those interested with a website which Hampton Inn provided specifically for folks coming to our event and wanting to stay overnight at a discounted rate, provided they reserve rooms by July 2.

- LibraryYouthServicesNetwork

SIG

<http://www.libraryyouthservicesnetwork.com>

CYC 2010 ★ *the 4<sup>th</sup> annual North Texas Children & Youth Conference for Library Personnel* ★ Thursday August 5 ★ **Winning Combinations** ★ LMRA

Keynote speaker Mark Moran, Founder and CEO of Dulcinea Media, will speak about Combining Literacy, Technology, Curiosity & Adventure and offer break-out sessions on steps to better web research and on using the web to supplement children's engagement with books, authors and other readers. Participant and exhibitor registrations build daily.

- LibraryPresentationsNetwork SIG <http://librarypresentationsnetwork.com>  
LP3 2010 ★ *the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual North Texas Conference for Library Program Planners and Presenters* ★ Thursday November 18 ★ LMRA  
Participant registration will open in July; exhibitor registration is open and building quickly. At LP3 2009 we realized – both figuratively and literally – the maximum number of exhibits which we can accommodate at a conference in the LMRA building; it is anticipated that we will be turning away exhibitors long before LP3 2010 takes place.

### **Accessibility**

- Designing Websites for Accessibility, a 5-hour hands-on workshop presented by Roanoke Public Library Director, Jesse Ephraim twice in June. This seems to have been a timely topic since regulations requiring that businesses' websites be ADA-accessible are in the works and could be finalized as soon as September, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Amigos Consultant Christine Peterson has provided NTLP with brief overviews of her meetings with the eight libraries receiving consultations regarding universal accessibility of their websites.
- Accessibility tools for Alvarado and Denton PLs, being purchased using funding assistance under NTLP's Special Projects grant from TSLAC, are on order.