

Executive Director's Column

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

Happy September!

Our website theme this month is, "Teens & Adults – Bringing harmony in the library." Our guest columnist is Debbie Raindl and Melody Leak from the John Ed Keeter Public Library in Saginaw, Texas. Please also do not forget to get involved in our ongoing discussion on our forum about the topic.

"Excuse me sir, but you are being too quiet for the library."

As I contemplated what I was going to write about for this month's column, I thought how libraries would be different if we had never had the stereotype of the dreaded "shh" with a finger to our lips. What would we have said instead if we wanted our patrons to act normally in the library and express their excitement over what we have to offer? The phrase above was the first thought that popped into my head. We should be encouraging patrons to be as loud as they want. At least, we should be doing this with the teens.

As you all remember, the teen years are filled with questions and discovery. We all tried to figure out who we were and how far we could take the rules without getting into too much trouble. Nothing has changed. My wife and I had a good giggle not too long ago when we saw a young male walking the streets of our neighborhood with his pants below his rear, showing off his black underpants. To us, the teen look absolute ridiculous. However, as my beautiful wife put it, "he probably thinks he looks cool."

The question at hand then, "How do you offer services to teens without infringing on the services you provide to others?" I personally believe we are past the age where libraries can be totally quiet and respectful in the entire building. Libraries need to offer a breadth of services to add value to their communities, which includes offering attractive, functional spaces where teens can be teens including being as loud as they want. At the same time, you have to respect the wishes of those who value the library as a place of reflection and meditation.

Several libraries in our System have taken this to heart by creating teen areas in their libraries. In fact, NTRLS staff assisted Roanoke with the creation of their teen area. Roanoke was the recipient of NTRLS @ Your Library, which is a program where NTRLS staff closes the office for a day to visit a library to help with a transformation process. Steve Brown, director of the North Richland Hills Public Library, made sure to include a coffee shop in his new library building to have a place for teens to gather, as well as other patrons, who are looking for more community than reflection. Steve also included several quiet areas in his library to make sure to have a place for people to study.

How do you know what teens want? Ask them! If your library does not have a Teen Advisory Board, you should create one and ask them what kind of space they desire in the library.

Lastly, it is also very self-serving to want to appeal to teens. After all, the teens today are the adults of tomorrow, who will most likely help to make decisions on funding levels for libraries.

This month, we are attempting something different with my column. We are including more of our monthly activities and attempting to outline what we are doing region by region. This section is based on the Executive Director's report that is provided to the NTRLS Board of Directors on a monthly basis.

Workshops

- Choosing the Best Reference Services in Vernon
- Valuing Your Library – NTRLS
- Forecasting and Libraries – North Richland Hills
- LE@D Courses continue to be available online.

Children's & Youth Conference for Librarians 2008

Submitted by dona weisman August 11, 2008

Last Friday the 2nd annual North Texas Children's & Youth Conference for Librarians was attended by approximately 160 people, 19 of whom were exhibitors and 15 of whom were session presenters. The Conference Planning Committee's idea of having the event catered by Pak-a-Pocket, a local Lebanese deli, seemed to be very well received at lunch time, but NTRLS staff has expressed disappointment in the afternoon refreshments. I know those came from Sam's and weren't nearly as tasty nor attractive as what we usually have at LMRA, so I'm assuming that we get the better refreshments from Jason's Deli and that we get them only when Jason's is the event caterer.

Another thing we tried for the first time during the conference was that of making the conference greener than usual. We put out special bins for recycling of the many plastic bottles and aluminum cans the conference generates but were disappointed to see how much trash those bins collected in addition to the intended items. Handouts were made available via our website, and everyone who had registered for the event by Aug. 1 was notified that they would need to download any handouts they wanted to have with them at the conference. Because we're also asking conference attendees and exhibitors to participate ONLINE in evaluation of the conference, we don't know yet how well the *green* concept was received.

Greg Anderson's keynote presentation, *Understanding and Managing Generational Differences*, contained just the right blend of information and humor

to hold everyone's attention and leave many of the attendees looking forward to attending the two break-out sessions he presented later in the day. Anyone who missed Greg's presentation is encouraged to watch our website for Nell Callison's podcast interview with him.

Greg has expressed interest in trying to work with NTRLS continuing education efforts in the future, which would be great since his company (Strategic Government Resources, Inc.) offers many training opportunities that fit our audience perfectly. He seems genuinely excited about having found out more about NTRLS, what we do and how we can partner with his company and get win/win/win results.

Since only 3 of the 20 break-out sessions were repeated, we encountered a new-to-us problem in that some of the sessions were so popular that there wasn't room for everyone who wanted to attend. Staff has already come up with possible ways to avoid or at least prepare for this problem in the future. Among the exhibitors were several children's book sales companies, a few companies new to library-related exhibit halls and even some companies which have been represented at one or both of the other NTRLS regional conferences. Both the sessions and the exhibitors seemed to get lots of attention and praise from attendees. Among the comments I've received via email since Friday are the following

... from session presenters:

- *Thank you for everything. It was just a great conference. I think my session went well and I learned a lot from the three that I went to on top of that!*
- *Thank you very much for the invitation to present at the NTRLS Children and Youth 2008 Conference: a most enjoyable experience.*

... from exhibitors:

- *I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed my time at CYC on Friday. The atmosphere was electric and the team spirit among public school and public library staff is a testimony to the effectiveness of your efforts and your organization's core values.*
- *Wanted to let you know that yesterday's event was well done. I look forward to next year.*

... from a participant:

- *I had a great time on Friday.*

Consulting

- Region 1:

Iowa park – consult on Reference collection and weeding

NTRLS Roadshow – Adam visited several Region 1 libraries to interview the library directors on their vision for their own library. These interviews were taped and will be made available to the library directors for their use. A tour of each

library was also taped. If time allows, NTRLS will also create a documentary to be shared on its upcoming video blog.

- Region 2:

Boyd – IT Specialist visit

Chico – consult 3 times on weeding

Jacksboro – IT Specialist visit

Newark – IT Specialist visit

Olney – Collection Analysis and weeding

- Region 3:

Aubrey – Collection Analysis

Flower Mound – Collection Analysis

Krum – IT Specialist visit

Ponder – IT Specialist visit

Roanoke – True Colors for Teens program

- Region 4:

Saginaw - Weeding

- Region 5:

Everman

Haltom City – Consult on DVD equipment

Kennedale – IT Specialist visit

- Region 6:

Azle – Consult on Staff Needs for new library

- Region 7:

Dublin – Staff Development training and weeding; IT Specialist visit.

Burleson – Image Audit

Granbury – 3 different consults on Collection Analysis and weeding

Stephenville – Image Audit

- Other Consulting:

UNT – Staff Development on True Colors

TCC – NE – Image Audit

Farmer's Branch – Staff Development Day Speaker

Plano – Staff Development Training – True Colors

On NTRLS.org

- Posted blog headlines to the news scroller (several times a week)
- Posted workshop flyers and handouts (about weekly, includes PDF conversion for handouts)
- Posted handouts for Technet and CYC (includes PDF conversion)
- Posted links to podcasts (weekly)
- Posted consultant reports
- Posted the podcast from the Leadership Etiquette workshop as a "handout"
- Updated pages: Website Directory, NTRLS Staff page, NTRLS Online page

- Updated page listing member library websites and OPAC. Checked and updated all links (Updated or added links for Burkburnett, Chico, Cleburne, Flower Mound Graham, Lewisville, Newark, Ponder, Saginaw, The Colony, Aledo, Dublin, Mineral Wells, Sanger, Springtown)
- Cosmetic updates to page listing member library automation systems
- Updated pages for NTRLS@YourLibrary program
- Updated Overdrive project page at NTRLS.org
- Created page on NTRLS.org about the SIGs and Regional Conferences
- Converted July article to web page
- Posted Executive Director's Report and IT story for July
- Built July website theme (links to podcast article, executive director's report, IT story, graphic, dicussion forum)
- Added links for Librarian's Marketplace
- Removed outdated links to surveys
- Converted August article to web page
- Posted Executive Director's Report and IT story for August
- Built August website theme (links to podcast article, executive director's report, IT story, graphic, dicussion forum)
- Posted link to Decatur's children's videos

Preparation for new NTRLS.org website

- Installed SQL Server Express 2005 on old webserver to prepare for work on new website
- Did planning for new website. Started installation of DotNetNuke.

Plinkit

- Added code to Dublin site for catalog search.
- Answered questions from Dublin about customizing the web page for their OPAC (they had to have the vendor do it)
- Renamed some objects in Dublin's "news" list to eliminate robot-generated spam
- For Dublin, removed icons from displaying in their navigation menu.
- Added robots.txt to all sites to reduce overload on TSLAC servers: Benbrook, Bowie, Dublin, Aledo, Henrietta, Mineral Wells, Nocona, Sanger, Springtown, The Colony, Venus.
- Exported backup copies of all sites. Benbrook, Bowie, Dublin, Aledo, Henrietta, Mineral Wells, Nocona, Sanger, Springtown, The Colony, Venus.
- Discussed Plinkit project with librarians from Jacksboro

Libraries & Regions served by Technology Consultant

Aledo	6	NTRLS.org, Plinkit
Benbrook	6	Overdrive, Plinkit
Bowie	2	Plinkit
Boyd	2	Other
Burkburnett	1	NTRLS.org
Chico	2	NTRLS.org
Cleburne	7	NTRLS.org
Decatur	2	NTRLS.org
Dublin	7	NTRLS.org, Plinkit
Flower Mound	3	NTRLS.org
Graham	2	NTRLS.org
Henrietta	1	Plinkit
Jacksboro	2	Plinkit
Keller	4	Overdrive
Lewisville	3	NTRLS.org
Mineral Wells	6	NTRLS.org, Plinkit
Newark	2	NTRLS.org
Nocona	2	Plinkit
Ponder	3	NTRLS.org
Saginaw	4	NTRLS.org, Overdrive
Sanger	3	NTRLS.org, Plinkit
Springtown	6	NTRLS.org, Plinkit
The Colony	3	NTRLS.org, Overdrive, Plinkit
Venus	7	Plinkit
Wichita Falls	1	Overdrive

O2U

Region 3:

Aubrey Area Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Carrollton Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 William T. Cozby Public Library, Coppell - 1 project, 381 materials
 Denton Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Flower Mound Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Frisco Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Justin Community Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Krum Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Lake Cities Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Lewisville Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Little Elm Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
 Pilot Point Community Library - 1 project, 381 materials

Plano Public Library System - 1 project, 381 materials
Betty Foster Public Library. Ponder - 1 project, 381 materials
Roanoke Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
Sanger Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials
The Colony Public Library - 1 project, 381 materials

Region 4:

Keller - 1 project -143 materials
Watauga 1 project -143 materials

Region 5:

Mansfield – 8 projects – 8 materials
Haltom City - 1 project -143 materials
Richland Hills- 1 project -143 materials

Region 6:

Benbrook- 1 project -143 materials
Burleson- 1 project -143 materials
Fort Worth – 15 projects- 2,145 materials

Shared Integrated Library System (SILS)

The library directors met once in July and once in August to put the finishing touches on a Request for Proposal. This request will be released in early September with the hopes of having a vendor chosen sometime in October. The Everman Public Library dropped out of the consortium due to financial hardship. There are currently 13 libraries in the consortium.

TSLAC Update

July LSA Board meeting

Adam attended this meeting which heard appeals from libraries in danger of losing their System memberships. Jacksboro Public Library lost its membership for FY2009, but will reapply to be members in 2010. It was also revealed at this meeting how TSLAC plans to allocate the \$2 million exceptional item for Systems if the legislature funds the request. The \$2 million will be placed in a negotiated grant program outside of the System funding formula. This means that the funds will be available outside of the System, similar to the TANG grant. It was also revealed that TSLAC plans to cut the Texas State Systems Program budget by an additional \$125,000 in FY2010 and 2011.

Commissioners Meeting

Because Adam was on vacation, Carolyn attended the commissioners meeting on August 4th. At this meeting, NTRL S was awarded two additional grants: Special Projects Grant and the System Competitive Grant. The two grants combined bring in just over \$134,000. The commissioners spoke to TSLAC

staff about how Systems seem to be the program cut first and expressed concern that Systems were being underfunded in order to carry out their missions.