

Executive Director's Report
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Back from PLA and planning for TLA.....

I was very fortunate to be selected to present a program at the **Public Library Association** Conference in Philadelphia last week. My program was *Help! I'm a Librarian, Not a Social Worker*. I had presented this a few times in Texas, and it seemed to go very well. It was a great experience to present at PLA and even better was the networking opportunity with librarians from around the United States. It is the vision of NTLP to serve libraries regardless of their geographic location, so the time spent in Philadelphia provided me the chance to share what NTLP is doing and our future goals.

Not surprisingly, one of the hot topics among librarians and vendors is the ongoing push and tug of publishers for online content. I took time and sat in sessions with Overdrive, 3M, the Digital Public Library of America, and other vendors and discovered that there is a new arena of competition. This was of particular interest to me, as NTLP is also working on an ebook platform idea. Please read about this and the preliminary guidelines on the NTLP webpage. (www.ntplibpartners.org) Jeff Palfrey, Harvard Law Library, stated it very well "It is totally perverse that we have all of this digital ability to make access for all, yet it is becoming more difficult as we progress." There seem to be many in the library world trying to ensure this access is available to libraries, and the next few months should be very interesting in terms of what becomes the current trend.

Another program I attended was *Dancing with Elephants: Leading Not Following during Tough Times*. There were two presenters, Jose Aponte from San Diego and Linda Mielke from Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System in New York. I must confess my notes are not well organized, and I am not sure which presenter said what comment, but a favorite heard at this program was "Don't let the 8% bomb throwers get you down." Also, the reminder to do the work worth doing was good. As NTLP continues to develop our business plan and goals, we are constantly reminded to focus on "what is worth doing." Our Partner Advisory Committee is currently thinking and planning for the next fiscal year – be sure and share your ideas!

Also shared was the definition of a lean library:

- 56% Personnel Costs
- 14% Materials Costs
- 10% IT Costs
- 10% Misc Costs
- 10% Other Costs

I admit I don't know the breakdown for Misc versus Other Costs, but I found the personnel and materials estimates to be curious. Many times a larger percentage of the budget is allocated to personnel cost. Advocating a lower percentage might cause a loss of staff and/or hours, which could be detrimental.

I attended many other sessions and learned nuggets of wisdom. I networked with other librarians in hallways and before sessions, advocated for partner libraries with vendors and just sat on the floor exhausted at the end of each day.

One of the best experiences was at the Reading Terminal Market – an amazing place with amazing food. It was very crowded, and there was an empty seat next to a woman who was very focused on her iPhone. I sat down and minded my own business, eating my nachos, when she looked up suddenly and realized I had sat down across from her. She was a Philly librarian who lived in downtown Philly and had grown up in New York City. We shared new ideas, what was happening in our areas, the future of libraries, etc... It was a great moment to realize we are all working towards a common goal – serving the public. She had a great accent and she, for some reason, thought I had an accent, but we had great communication. I was really impressed by the friendliness of the people in Philadelphia and the great Bed & Breakfast that I stayed in – give The Gables a chance if you are in the area. Warren makes a gourmet breakfast every morning!

Finally, this is the first year in many years that I am an attendee only at TLA – not presenting and not on local arrangements. I look forward to attending and having flexibility to see and hear what I choose – which will be fun and informative I am sure. All of the NTLP staff will be talking with vendors to provide more discounts to our partner libraries. Please remember to let vendors know they can work group discounts through NTLP and hopefully save your library, and other libraries, some money. NTLP has around 50 partner libraries this year so far, and there is power in numbers!

Thanks to all of the libraries which have become partners and see the value in working together.