LearningExchange

Ohio Library Council Looks to the Future During Difficult Economic Crisis

by Christopher Korenowsky, Director of Professional Development, Ohio Library Council

On Friday, July 17, the Ohio Library Council (OLC) Board of Directors made the difficult decision to cancel the 2009 Ohio Library Council Convention & Expo, Oct. 21-23, in Cleveland.

This decision was unanimously supported by

Logo from saveohiolibraries.com

Tom Adkins (Garnett Wilson Public Library), Convention Chair, as well as the Planning Committee Chairs - Cindy Lombardo (Cleveland Public Library), Program Chair; Andrew Mangels (Westlake Porter Public Library), Local Arrangements Chair; Jamie Mason (Rocky River Public Library), Expo Chair.

The OLC Convention & Expo is considered to be the signature event of our professional association. In light of the recent developments in the state's public library funding and the drastic adjustments that all libraries have been making to their operations, we felt this was the most fiscally-responsible route for both our members and the OLC.

So what happened? On June 19, Governor Ted Strickland recommended, as part of his "Budget Framework" press conference, that the Public Library Fund (PLF) be cut by an estimated 30% or approximately $227.3 million. This proposed cut was on top of the almost 20% reduction that the PLF is experiencing in 2009 because of declining state revenue.

If passed as proposed by the Governor, the combined effect of the PLF cut and revenue reduction would have resulted in public libraries losing almost 50% of their

Pres4Lib 2009: A Camp Recap

by Peter Bromberg, Assistant Director South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative

On March 2, 2009 I received an email from Learning RT Board Secretary Janie Hermann, which read, "I would like to organize a Presentation Camp. Topics would be incorporating images into your slide deck, public speaking skills, customized slide design, etc. I was thinking mid-June would be good. I contacted John LeMasney (Rider University) about it and he was ready to hop on board with the concept immediately. Am I nuts? Or are you in with me?"

My immediate response was, "This idea rocks the house!" With that, the wheels were in motion… Three months later, over fifty people gathered at the Princeton Public Library for *Pres4Lib 2009: A Camp for Library Speakers and Trainers*. Pres4lib was a first-of-its-kind; a full day of conversations, presentations, sharing, and networking, devoted solely to the topic of effective speaking presentations.

The event was a huge success, and something that could be easily replicated in other parts of the country.

Pres4Lib: 4Reasons 4Success

1. Decentralized Collaboration
2. Unconference 2.0
3. Live Virtual Participation
4. Archived Content

1. DECENTRALIZED COLLABORATION

Pres4Lib was a true collaboration. Co-sponsored by the Princeton Public Library, the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (SJRLC), the Central Jersey Regional Library Cooperative (CJRLC), the New Jersey

New ideas to share?

Send your articles to the editors at

editor@alalearning.org!

LearnRT Board 2009 - 2010

Outgoing President's Message

By Stacy Schrank, Learning RT Past President

It is with a mixed bag of emotions that I write this last article as your round table's President. I am sad when I think that my 'defined' leadership role has come to an end, but I am thrilled to be a part of the transformation our round table is headed for during the coming weeks, months, and years ahead.

Before we talk about the future, I would like to take a moment and reflect on all the great things that have happened during the past year for CLENE. During our Midwinter Planning Meetings the wheels were set in place for all the CLENE-sponsored conference programs and events planned for the Annual Conference in Chicago. And the wheels didn't stop turning after Midwinter… With the use of ALA's OPAL platform, the CLENE Board and the membership were able to hold online meetings to continue working out the details of our conference programs and other business of the round table. Although technology tends to throw a few curve balls, the game of online meetings was a home run! We are always looking for more involvement from round table members, so I invite you to join us for one of our monthly online meetings.

CLENE conducted two pre-conference programs at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago: "*Making it Stick: Designing, Delivering, and Surviving Presentations*" and "*Punch It Up With Pictures: Presentations With Visual Power.*" Registration for both sessions 'sold-out' online prior to the conference and several attendees signed up in person at the conference. Participants left the sessions with a plethora of new tools to carry along with them in their presentation toolbag.

The ALA Annual Conference also included three other wonderful CLENE programs: CLENE board member Lori Reed and incoming CLENE President Pat Carterette presented "Creating A Culture of Learning in Your Library" to a full house; CLENE member Paul Signorelli wowed his crowd with "How to Develop A Mentoring Program"; and Sunday's Training Showcase event brought droves of conference attendees to the far South corner of the convention center for two hours of best practice sharing focused on continuing education and staff development. Participation in CLENE events came with an added bonus this year – a free goody bag provided by Pat Wagner of Pattern Research (www.pattern.com) in Denver, CO.

Topping off our success this year is the approval of our new round table name, the Learning Round Table

Stacy Schrank

(LearnRT.) This name change was approved by ALA Council.

Why the name change? Based the results of a recent survey of both ALA and CLENERT membership, only a small percentage of members knew that CLENE existed and what we stood for.

Learning is who we are and what we do - our new name will enhance the important work being conducted by our members throughout the organization. Watch for a new look and new logo in the coming months, with a full roll-out at Midwinter in Boston.

The fantastic work being done in CLENERT takes a dedicated team of members. I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of our board members whose terms were completed at the end of this year's annual conference:

Ms. Pat Hogan, Poplar Creek Public Library District, IL
Ms. Patricia (Hay) Morris, Northeast Florida Library, FL
Ms. Mary Bucher Ross, Library Consultant, WA

Incoming board members who will be working with the incoming LearnRT leadership include:

Mr. Jay Turner, Gwinnett County Public Library, GA
Ms. Sandra Smith, Denver Public Library, CO
Ms. Lori Reed, Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, NC
Ms. Louise Whitaker, Pioneer Library System, OK

During the coming months, I will be looking for a 'few good people' to run for three board positions in 2010. Members who wish to be considered for these positions should contact me as soon as possible. Being an active member of LearnRT is a wonderful development opportunity (and very rewarding!).

Please join me in wishing the rest of the current board of the Learning Round Table success in the opportunities that lie ahead!

state funding.

The PLF is established in "permanent law" and is funded through 2.22% of total general tax revenue. The PLF was set at this percentage in the last biennium, so that the fund would be a true revenue sharing fund with state government. As state revenue increases, public libraries enjoy increased funding, but as state revenue declines, library funding falls.

Immediately following the Governor's press conference, the Ohio Library Council contacted libraries across the state, and urged them to reach out to their customers and ask for their support in contacting the Governor and state legislators. Library stakeholders, community leaders, trustees and library staff launched an amazing advocacy effort.

The Ohio Senate reports receiving more than one e-mail per minute from library supporters. Phone calls and e-mails poured into the House of Representatives and the Governor's office. With few exceptions, the communications were wonderful stories of how much the library means to library users. Legislators are impressed, very impressed. Within the first days of this effort, legislators were looking to reach some compromise that would reduce the extent of the Governor's proposed cuts.

Ultimately, public libraries in the state of Ohio will receive about 30% less in 2009 than they received in 2008. About 20% of that reduction is a result of declining revenue, and 10% is a result of the additional cut.

As the dust begins to settle on the new realities of state library funding, I was reminded of a Thomas Edison quote that I read once, "Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

There is undoubtedly a large amount of hard work ahead for all of us. Some familiar ways of doing our jobs will go away. New ways of doing more work with fewer resources will only increase. The needs of our customers will rise significantly.

Despite all this, I think there is tremendous opportunity to look at professional development for the OLC membership. More than any time in recent memory, the OLC will use its member-focused approach to provide relevant services and leading-edge information on issues important to the future of Ohio's libraries.

In the near future the OLC plans to restructure its education programming to respond to members' needs in the challenging times ahead. Efforts are under way to explore several different education alternatives, including regional on-site visits and electronic options.

I think now is the time for networking with colleagues when possible and focusing on professional growth.

The OLC is committed to providing a wide array of learning experiences in a variety of locations for all members during these difficult budget times.

State Library, and the Bloggers of Library Garden (http://librarygarden.net), the event had a real "let's put on a show" ethos, with many people lending a hand to make the day a success. Designed as an "unconference", the content and structure was largely determined by the participants. We put up a wiki (http://pres4lib. pbworks.com) and invited participants to tell us what they wanted to cover, and what they wanted to contribute. Princeton Public Library handled the space, IT, and catering, SJRLC handled the registration, the State Library handled video and photography, and John LeMasney did great graphic design work on the wiki, and official handouts and materials.
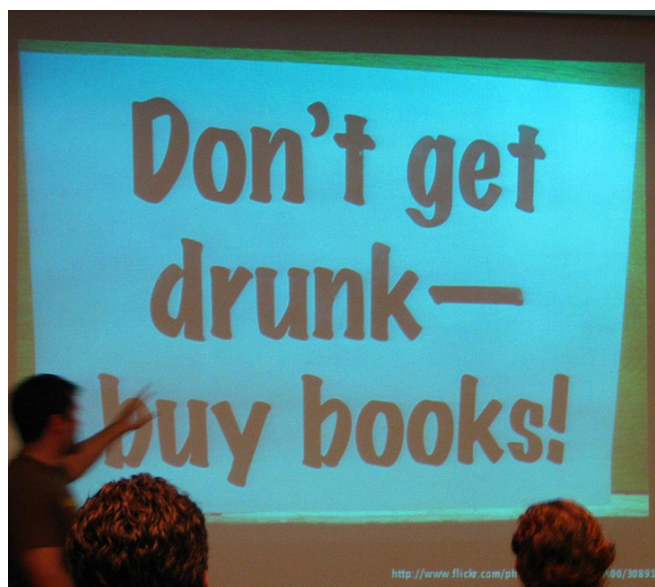
2. UNCONFERENCE 2.0
We designed Pres4Lib based on our experiences with other unconferences. While we liked the Unconference 1.0 approach to deciding what topics of discussion to have throughout the day ("birds of a feather sessions"), we also felt that unconferences wasted too much face-to-face (f2f) time on the day of the conference trying to figure out the scheduling and program track logistics.

To address this, we used the wiki and a free Zoomerang account to poll participants before the actual event to ask for topic suggestions and gauge interest. This allowed us to schedule topics and breakout rooms ahead-of-time, and launch right into programs and discussions on the day of the event, maximizing the quality of f2f time for participants. In the end, we combined open space "birds of a feather" breakout discussion groups with pre-scheduled "lightning talks" to share ideas and technologies. We also hosted a fun "Battledecks" competition, where presenters improvised to PowerPoint slides they had not seen before. These efforts combined to create a more structured unconference experience, that I call *Unconference 2.0*.

3. VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION
We knew that we were physically limited to approximately fifty attendees. We also wanted to a have "virtual" attendees follow along and participate. We were able to offer a rich, live experience to anyone choosing to join us from home or work by setting up a live Ustream (www.ustream.tv) feed and designating an official Twitter hashtag (#pres4lib). Based on the Twitter discussion, we had at least another fifty people actively participating, with perhaps even more people watching but not tweeting.

A Pres4lib presentation, picture by Polly-Alida Farrington

4. ARCHIVED CONTENT
We extended Pres4Lib learning by offering archived content. Benefits of using Ustream are that it archives video, and works in conjunction with "Follow it Live" to integrate and archive the Twitter conversation. A number of participants also had Flip video cameras on hand, and uploaded high quality videos to YouTube. At the end of the day, we had an archive of the day's video AND of the Twitter conversations. Additionally, we set up a shared bookmark group using Diigo.com, and encouraged participants to share their notes on the wiki. This means that much of the learning and sharing is now easily accessible on the wiki at http://pres4lib. pbworks.com. In fact, participants have actively continued to add notes, pictures and bookmarks to the wiki, weeks after the actual event.

If you missed Pres4Lib, check out the the wiki at: http://pres4lib.pbworks.com. If you are interested in hosting your own Presentation Camp, or an unconference on another topic, DO IT! It's fulfilling, fun, and easier than you think!

Battledecks Competition? What's That?

A speaking competition where the presenters improvise to "decks" of PowerPoint slides they haven't seen before. See examples at:

http://pres4lib.pbworks.com/Battle-Decks

6th Annual Training Showcase in Review

by Pat Carterette, LearnRT President

Attendees picking up information at the Training Showcase

From innovative training resources to staff development day ideas, the 6th annual Training Showcase had something for everyone! Two hundred eager attendees hiked over to McCormick Place South hoping to find speakers for their next event, and ideas for innovative training initiatives and best practices in staff training, staff development and continuing education. They were not disappointed! Attendees had a blast at this year's Training Showcase! Here are a few highlights in case you weren't able to attend:

* $1500 in sponsorships
* $2500 in door prizes
* 25 participant/exhibitors from 15 states
* 9 speakers each giving 10-minute sample previews of a presentation
* LITA's BIGWIG group interviewing attendees, participants/exhibitors and speakers
* Networking opportunities
* Refreshments

Great door prizes added to the fun and excitement of the Training Showcase. *WebJunction* was a GOLD Level Sponsor and the *Crisis Prevention Institute/Prepare Training Program* was a SILVER Level Sponsor. For a complete list of donors, check the blog at http://alalearning.org/2009/08/21/thank-you-to-our-sponsors/

If you correspond with our donors or purchase from them, will you please tell them you heard about them through the ALA Training Showcase and thank them for their door prize donation?

The 7th Annual Training Showcase will be in Washington D.C. in June 2010. LearnRT board member Louise Whitaker will be the Training Showcase chair. The planning process starts at ALA Midwinter in Boston.

Watch for opportunities to participate as an exhibitor (libraries, library organizations, speakers, presenters, consultants, vendors, etc), a sponsor, a donor, or as a volunteer to plan or help at ALA. If you have question about next year's Training Showcase, contact Louise at louise@pls.lib.ok.us.

Its a BLaST

by Tom Taylor, Continuing Education Coordinator, South Central Kansas Library System

Twenty seven librarians recently completed the Basic Library Skills Training (BLaST) annual program with quarterly day-long training created to improve library services for the patrons of South Central Kansas Library System (SCKLS) libraries. This program is designed to address the needs of the librarian, staff or trustee at the one-person library and those new to the library profession by providing training covering common library concerns. Topics at the quarterly sessions included: Basic Library Information & What It Is All About, Basic Customer Service & Tools to Help, Basic Library Technology & Putting It to Use and Basic Library Programming & Services.

Sessions are taught by SCKLS staff and member librarians. According to Tom Taylor, SCKLS Continuing Education Coordinator, "BLaST trainings allow new librarians and library staff the opportunity to learn about basic and fundamental library services. In these trainings the new librarians get to meet and learn alongside other new librarians throughout the region. This provides them with networking opportunities that can continue well past the trainings."

SCKLS Director Paul Hawkins added "Our BLaST training meets an important need that allows librarians an opportunity to learn and network."

The South Central Kansas Library System is one of seven regional library systems in Kansas. SCKLS has 147 members representing 73 Public; 55 School District; 14 Academic; and 5 Special libraries in 12 counties. The SCKLS current service population is: 750,792. The mission of SCKLS is to provide grants, consulting, continuing education and cost-effective support services to its 149 member public, school, academic and special libraries in twelve counties.

On Virtual Learning...

By Alison Miller, MS LIS, Researcher in Distance Education, FSU

As a new member of the ALA Learning Round Table (LearnRT), I was very excited to learn about the opportunity to attend virtual board meetings. I was immediately welcomed to the round table, received really great information and discovered that the group actually had monthly, online board meetings!

I have been a participant in many groups and committees and LearnRT is a step ahead in providing this medium for meetings. Hosted through OPAL, the meetings run smoothly and are very informative. Information and board activities are shared with all who attend – board and non-board members. This allows members to see what the Board has been working on, what activities are taking place, and contribute through conversation. It gives members a chance to interact using voice and chat. Comments and contributions are encouraged, allowing members to truly be part of the round table.

The online meeting format is particularly effective in light of the recent round table name change. Regular information and updates were shared and much discussion took place. This collaboration is instrumental to true group involvement. The ability to collaborate and network also transitioned to the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. I had not officially met many of the round table members, but seeing names and sharing chat and conversation in the virtual meetings really helped with connecting in person.

Many of us are unable to meet in person, but are very interested in contributing to the profession and our own growth. However, contributed efforts seem much more effective when hybrid interaction is available. Physical meetings are very productive, but these virtual meetings also contribute to productivity – individually and as a round table. Many groups/committees/round tables may not offer this type of platform for meeting because of a fear of technical issues or participation. With the LearnRT, even when there are technical glitches, another board member immediately steps up and continues the meeting. There are also always many members in attendance.

As our new name implies, learning is valuable and viable through many platforms or mediums. For many, virtual interaction is the only way to participate - I know that this is the case for me, as I work completely virtually. I am now more able to be involved in and contribute to great groups such as LearnRT.

The Learning Round Table's hybrid activity through virtual meetings, the listserv, ALA Connect and face to face meetings is a model of learning and communication.

Pictures from ALA Annual 2009 in Chicago, IL

Pictures were taken from various members' flickr accounts and from the pictures posted to the Facebook fan page. If you have pictures you would like to share please post them to the fan page or tag them ala learning in flickr

What is in a name?

The *ALA Learning Round Table*, or *LearnRT*, was approved as the round table's new name at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago. We are the first round table to move away from acronyms. We are the Learning Round Table - learning is who we are and what we do! We have started to reflect the name change in a few ways, but there will be more to come, including a new logo, and a new look on our web pages. Here is what we have so far, and stay tuned for more!

CLENERT is now LearnRT

http://cebuzz.wordpress.com/ is now http://alalearning.org

CLENExchange is now LearningExchange

Check the blog for upcoming virtual meeting dates -
your opportunity to learn more about this and other LearnRT happenings!

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