

TEXAS LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

APRIL 15-18

DALLAS

BOOKS, BYTES & BEYOND

Attended by Friends Paula Highfill, President and Jenny Elliott, Vice President.

These brief descriptions are meant to provide an overview of we did at conference. They cannot begin to describe what the entire experience is like – the many people you meet, the many topics there are to learn about and the inspiration you come away with. Paula and Jenny would be more than happy to answer any questions you have or talk about any particular session we attended in more detail. Our Friends group covers expenses for two officers to attend each year. Any Friends member is welcome to attend on their own. There are many sessions of interest to Friends groups – more than two people can cover. We would encourage all of you to experience it for yourself.

TUESDAY, APRIL 15

All Conference Welcome Party at the Nasher Sculpture Center

This was a beautiful venue for a packed event! Paula & Jenny talked with librarians Jennifer Rike and Pam Pinkerton from MISD about the upcoming Mansfield Reads! event.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

General Session 1 with Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

This type of session is one of the perks of attending TLA. Here is the general description: “After 12 years of collaboration as founding members of the band *Rock Bottom Reminders*, Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Dave Barry and bestselling author Ridley Pearson joined literary forces in *Peter and the Starcatchers*, a funny and brilliant prequel to *Peter Pan*. Now, with three books in the series and eye patches in their pockets, this madcap duo travels the country, delighting audiences with their antics.”

It is always interesting to hear and meet authors. In this case it was hilarious, too! And, you never know when you might meet a rep or make a contact that could help with Reads! TLA also presents their yearly awards and introduces new officers at this session.

Around the World in 80 Dinners with the Jamisons

We attended this session because we thought it might give us some ideas for a fundraising event. As it turned out, the concept was a little different than we expected. The Jamisons are cookbook authors and travel guides. The title of the session is the title

of their latest book which is an account of their literal trip around the world and the 80 amazing places they had dinner. It might be a stretch to actually turn this idea into a fundraiser or even a library event (think progressive dinner in the book stacks where books on or about certain countries are highlighted), but these authors were a delight and the session was certainly inspiring!

LiFTA Luncheon

This luncheon is sponsored by the Library Friends, Trustees and Advocates Round Table (of which we are members). The librarians, advisory board members and Friends members that attend this program take up an entire table! On the panel were literacy champion and award-winning children's author Rosemary Wells, bestselling author Elizabeth Noble and first-time author Jenna Bush (yes, that Jenna Bush). They shared their insights on literacy, writing for varied audiences and their personal journeys in writing their latest books. LiFTA presented their annual grant and stipend awards.

Donor Development: Finding Friends and Funds for Your Library

This program was sponsored by Friends of Libraries and Archives of Texas. Mickey DuVall, library director of Bastrop Texas spoke about the capital campaign and bond election that, after 8 years, resulted in a new 2.7 million dollar library and \$600,000 in fundraising. Mary Beth Harrington, consultant and former executive director of the Austin Public Library and Betsy Pepper, executive director of the Fort Worth Public Library Foundation spoke on the role of foundations and the impact they have. Did you know that the idea of a Public Library Foundation has been mentioned at our own library board meetings? This session was more about very large efforts than day to day mechanics.

The Building You Need and Planning for it

Presented by a library planning specialist and a library-friendly award-winning architect, this session addressed trends in library facilities, such as technology space requirements and green buildings, and strategies for developing creative yet functional library buildings.

Book Cart Drill Team Challenge

I know, you're thinking "Whaaat?" Teams decorate book carts (you know, two shelves and four wheels that are pushed around the library) and perform a routine with them to music. Yes, librarians have a whacky side. We went to cheer on the team from MISD libraries that included Library Advisory Board member Cindy Gray. The "Pink Ladies" Took second place!

THURSDAY, APRIL 17

Fundraising and Public Relations: Try Reaching the Next Level without Them

Tim Caboni, an associate dean at Vanderbilt University Peabody College presented a very detailed Power Point presentation on fundraising for non profit organizations. His perspective was from a university viewpoint but the principles he talked about apply almost universally. The focus of this session was on major fundraising put provided a lot of information on what it takes to build the foundation you need to get there and many surprising facts and figures.

Marketing Your Library Like a Bookstore

This session is available on disc at the library.

Linda Germain, Regional Community Relations Manager for Barnes&Noble talked about how B&N does what it does to attract and keep customers and how libraries can do the same things. The five topics she addressed were merchandising, trends in publishing and how to deal with them, atmosphere and environment, customer service, and community outreach and partnership. This session was very interesting and informative.

Public Libraries Build for the Future

This session is available on disc at the library.

Librarian directors from the Montgomery County Memorial Library System and the Harris County Public Library discussed the nuts and bolts of building new library facilities from the Needs Assessment (did you know that the Mansfield Public Library Advisory Board is working with a consultant on our own Needs Assessment?) to celebrating when it is finished.

Texas Book Festival Benchmark Projects: Tips from Winners

Recipients of Texas Book Festival grants described their programs and gave tips on creating grant applications that will be awarded. Although Friends groups cannot apply for Texas Book Festival Grants, they are awarded directly to libraries; there are many times we could be of assistance with programs. Mansfield Public Library has been the recipient of two Texas Book Festival Grants.

Library Boards: Educating Your Best Advocates

This session, sponsored by LiFTA, was presented by the director of the San Antonio Public Library, a member of the Dallas Public Library Municipal Board, and a former board member from a small private library at Cedar Creek Lake. Because the Friends President is an ex-officio member of the Mansfield Public Library board I attended this session to gain some insight about how other libraries interact with their board members

and to try to assess how our board measures up when it comes to advocacy. In the past, the Mansfield Library has not really been in need of advocacy because it has been typically well funded through the city budget process. However, expansion means bigger budget needs and a capitol campaign and/or bond election. There are also many legislative issues that affect all libraries. The need for advocacy in Mansfield could be in the near future. It was interesting to hear how large libraries use their board members as public relations ambassadors and how effective board members can be.

Read Across the Prairie: Becoming a Community of Readers

Wow! Read Across the Prairie is the reading initiative created by librarians in the Grand Prairie school district. It has been successful beyond their wildest expectations (they even published a book!) We thought that many of their tips and techniques would be applicable to our Mansfield Reads! program. We were happy to learn that we do employ some of the same methods but we also picked up some marketing tips and learned a lot about incorporating more of the officials and personalities in the city. This program was awe inspiring.

General Session 2 – Transforming Libraries

This was a panel discussion about the future of libraries. There are some contentious issues out there! Have you heard that libraries, as they are known in the traditional sense, will become obsolete because of technology? Did you know that librarians are perceived by some to be on the way out the door? Can you believe that there is a big debate in the library community itself about the role of libraries and librarians in the future? We determined that libraries and librarians are more in need of “Friends” than ever!

The Texas Library Disaster Relief Fund raffles a piece of artwork each year at conference. This year’s exquisite full color gouache illustration was won by our own Paula Highfill! Look for it in the library around the holidays.

A Memoir-able Evening with the Authors

This dinner featured readings from five esteemed writers, including Sarah Bird and Tomie dePaola, and was not only enjoyable but insightful and entertaining!

FRIDAY, APRIL 18

Dallas Digitized: Stories from the Scanner

Since local history was mentioned frequently in the recent survey that the Mansfield Library undertook as something that patrons expected in the library and since one of the requests for funding from our library director included digitization of the local newspaper we thought we might get some inside information about how the Dallas Public Library took on the project of digitizing their history. Much of this session was technical

information and the Dallas project was much bigger than Mansfield's would be, but it did become clear that putting history in the library is a big challenge!

Dewey or Don't We? Deleting Decimals at Southlake Public Library

Did you know that the Southlake Public Library no longer uses the Dewey Decimal System? As you can imagine, this is a hotly debated topic among libraries today. Many library patrons expect their libraries to be more like the "comfy" bookstores they visit. Southlake took it upon themselves to figure out to become what their patrons asked for. It is a radical solution, but not as far-fetched as you might think.

Local History in Libraries: Archival Basics

Presented by the associate archivist at Rice University, this session was very informative. "Archives" does not mean that you have some old papers in the back room! There are nationally recognized standards and an entire field of specialization in archives. It was interesting to hear how libraries and historical societies can work together (as has been proposed in Mansfield) to preserve a community's history. There is an entire school of thought that believes that libraries are the natural curators of a community's history and have a duty to preserve it and keep it updated. This is a topic that is very relevant to us as we consider how library expansion will benefit the citizens of Mansfield.

IN CONCLUSION

The Texas Library Association Annual Conference is many things. It is informative, educational, inspiring, invigorating, tiring and fun! There are many more sessions than we have people to attend them – consider serving as an officer of the Friends and representing us in the future. Or, just come for the fun of it!

Jenny and Paula will be happy to discuss anything you have questions about or talk about any session that you have a particular interest in. We thank you for the opportunity to represent the Friends of the Mansfield Public Library.