

MPLA Board Report  
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Nevada



Nevada’s delegation to the 2012 National Library Legislative Day in Washington, D.C., on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> included Robbie deBuff, our Nevada Library Association president ; Sara Jones, director of Carson City Libraries and NLA’s Delegate to ALA; Daphne DeLeon, State Librarian; and Tammy Westergard, Carson City Library Deputy Director. Issues raised were funding, privacy, open access, e-government services, and school library programs.

The Nevada Library Association continues to work on a new Strategic Plan, and planning is going forward for the 2012 Snapshot Day.

The NLA Conference, “Byte the Book,” is scheduled for October 4-6, with a pre-conference on Oct. 3, at the Sahara West Library in Las Vegas, the first time in years that the conference has actually been held at a library. Requests for program items are out. Robbie has invited Dana to attend, and hopes that other MPLA members will come too!

#### **School Libraries =**

In Las Vegas, the Whitney Elementary Library has had a complete makeover – courtesy of the Ellen show! Earlier in the year, Principal Sherri Gahn appeared on the Ellen Show . Her school serves many homeless students, and 85% of her students are “free-and-reduced-lunch” kids. As a result, Target gave the school \$100,000 for school supplies; Motorola gave \$50,000 for sports and exercise equipment; Justin Bieber performed at the school and matched the \$100,000 donation; but best of all, Target funded and entirely rebuilt their school library (prior to this, the newest books were copyright 1999.) This is a principal who knows priorities!

But it’s not all good news at all..

As you’re aware, I’ve tried to be a voice for school libraries in NLA and MPLA. Even though it’s financially challenging for most school librarians, I’d love to see more membership in both NLA and MPLA. I believe that opportunities for professional development grants can provide some impetus for joining.

In Nevada, as in many states, libraries provide essential connections for the community, and many of those connections are fostered by a child’s use of his/her school library. In some cases, the school library exists in partnership with a public library; in the little town of Gerlach where there are now only 9 students in the school, in Verdi, in Virginia City, in Natchez, and in several schools in southern Nevada, partnerships mean that a community has library access where it might not otherwise have been possible. The partnership library is a win-win situation for both the school population and the public.

But I am deeply concerned about the future of school libraries, and I'm sure that Nevada libraries are no different than school libraries in other western states. Every school district is facing budget cuts, and when schools must cut jobs or increase class size, the libraries suffer. In Washoe County, at least one middle school librarian has lost her job because the principal believes that computers will make a library unnecessary. All middle schools and high schools have lost their assistants. In Clark County, there are at least five high schools with no certified librarian, and there will undoubtedly be more if current budget predictions prove true.

So..... whenever you have the opportunity, whenever an opening presents itself, please.... Advocate for school libraries. They're almost an endangered species.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Fockler  
NLA rep. to MPLA