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TMLDA COMMUNIQUE

Fall 2005

Texas Municipal Library Directors Association is an Affiliate of the Texas Municipal League

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

RoseAleta Laurell

I've spent way too much time lately staring, transfixed, at the TV screen, horrified and dismayed by the tragedy wrought by Katrina and Rita and wondering just what went wrong. I've been engulfed by the overwhelming sense of helplessness and quite frankly anger that so many of our citizens lack the resources to protect themselves from what was an obvious threat to their lives. That leads directly to the question: So what can be done, and more to the point what am I doing about it?

My family has suffered a very personal and terrifying tragedy, although whether directly connected to Rita is not at all clear, but I kept asking myself, why do these bad things happen to people who are struggling so hard to get out of the rotten situations they've found themselves in? Why does it seem to happen to the poor? Why does it happen to the ones who have lacked opportunities all their lives? Why do these horrible, unspeakable things happen to people who were doing the best they could with what they had?

Inevitably, I come back to the conclusion that somehow education has to be paramount to rising above poverty and social class. Education gives people options, choices and that's somehow the key to gaining control over your life and the random and horrific things

that happen in life. None of us is immune to hurt, tragedy, pain and loss, but some people seem to be able to sort out and pick up the pieces quicker and easier than others, while others seemingly cope and go on. The key is options and options come with education.

If we as librarians doubt our value, then we need to remember that librarians are providing choices and options for a large number of people who choose to take advantage of what we provide. Despite the federal government's official stance, we are the front-line and the purveyors of education for a preponderance of America's citizens. We provide information, services and training with no regard to color, creed or economic status. This is certainly no panacea, and there are no simple answers, but it does provide a modicum of comfort during very troubling times.

Be proud of your life and your work and for the nation's sake, I hope we keep doing it and inspire others to do the same.



See p. 2 for information
on the TML Conference.

TML Annual Conference

**Stronger Cities:
Stronger Texas**

October 26-28, 2005

**Gaylord Texan Resort
Grapevine TX**

**TMLDA Program
and Meeting
Friday, October 28th
9:00-11:45 a.m.**

**Panel Discussion:
Setting Your Library Free:
Library Taxing Districts in Texas**

Panelists: **Lee B. Brawner**, former Library Director, Metropolitan Library District, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; **Eloise May**, Library Director, Arapahoe Library District, Englewood, Colorado; **Steve Brown**, Library Director, City of North Richland Hills, and Chair, Joint State Library District Legislation Task Force; and **James Stewart**, Library Director, City of Victoria, and Chair, Texas Library Association Legislative Committee

Is a public library district the right choice for your community? New legislation has opened up powerful and flexible new options for funding and organizing your library. Explore the options with a knowledgeable and distinguished panel of experts from the state and the nation.

TMLDA Booth at the TML Conference

TMLDA will have an exhibitor's booth at the TML conference so we can talk with elected and appointed officials about library issues. This year we will be spreading the word about the new Library Districts legislation.

We will also be handing out Free to Read library gel bands, chocolate and of course we will have our daily drawings for fabulous prizes.

If you would like to volunteer at the booth during the conference please contact Sue Compton at sue.compton@flower-mound.com. If you would just like to stop by and say hi, network with your colleagues, and pick up your gel bracelet you will find TMLDA at booth 904.

TMLDA Proposed Constitution Change

The following proposed change to the TMLDA Constitution will be voted on at the TMLDA business meeting at the conference on Friday morning:

Article III. MEMBERSHIP

Add "library districts" following the word "counties" in Section 3.01 A. and B.

The Constitution would be amended as follows:

Section 3.01 There shall be two levels of membership for the association.

- A. All library directors, head librarians, and system coordinators serving municipalities, counties, *library districts*, or state library systems shall be eligible for membership. These members are eligible to vote, to hold elected office and to serve on a standing committee within the association.
- B. All library management staff and assistant system coordinators serving municipalities, counties, *library districts*, or state library systems shall be eligible for membership. These members are eligible to vote and to serve on a standing committee within the association.

Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award

This is a new annual award given by TMLDA to libraries that demonstrate their service excellence through the attainment of ten service criteria.

Many members wonder why another award when there are plenty of awards given by ALA, PLA, TLA, and regional systems. This award is given by the library directors affiliate group of the Texas Municipal League, the one organization that is familiar to your city's appointed and elected officials.

This award spotlights the many wonderful services your library provides and if awarded to your library ensures that your appointed and elected officials know about your good work.

Unlike many other awards presented by ALA, PLA, and TLA, the Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award is presented not to just one or two libraries but to any library that can demonstrate their service excellence.

If a library receives the Achievement of Excellence in Libraries Award and wishes to have a presentation made at a city council meeting, TMLDA officers will be available to make the presentation.

For more information on the award and for a copy of the application please visit the TMLDA website at www.tmlida.org. The application deadline for 2005 is December 31.

**Start preparing now to
apply for this award!**
Show your governmental entity
that you have an Excellent Library!

TMLDA Newsletter Editor

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