

Brief Notes  
STLS Plan of Service Committee Meeting  
Dormann Library  
April 11, 2006

Attending: Owen Frank, Jim Sleeth, Chemung County; Mary Geo Tomion, Dundee; Joan Tavernier, Fillmore; Heidi Berghoff, Montour Falls; Harriet Eisman, Watkins Glen; Karen Deutsch, Wayland; Brian Hildreth, Wellsville; Peggy Field, STLS trustee; Lorie Brown, Shelley MacFeiggan, Ristiina Wigg, STLS.

The committee began by reviewing a number of documents (2007 -2011 Plan of Service meeting notes, documents and other information are being posted at: <http://www.stls.org/about/planofservice.htm>)

*Focus Groups with Community Members.* Of committee members, Heidi Berghoff, Harriet Eisman, and Brian Hildreth have sponsored focus groups for community members. They reported that: Focus group members were satisfied with services, while looking to the future They wanted libraries to keep up with technology in addition to providing core library services. The groups provided a lot of support for libraries as a place, a place to attend programs, meet, socialize, and to be a community focus. Group members emphasized books, discussed story hours and advocated for traditional services. They wanted more places to sit and read, more computers, and downloadable books.

Committee members echoed focus group comments. Joan Tavernier reported that her patrons want more computers than the three that the library has currently. Heidi Berghoff mentioned downloadable books. Remote access is the wave of the future; at the same time patrons emphasize the library as place. When some first time Wellsville users were taught to use STARCat, one asked, "Do you not want people coming to your library anymore?" Mary Geo Tomion said that Dundee teens want faster computers. Karen Deutsch said that her patrons want more and more, including downloads from recorded books, updated services, more wireless, and community services for kids. With scarce resources where do we want to place the emphasis? STLS and member library responsibilities need to be clarified to prevent overlap of service and to focus System services.

*Focus Groups with Library Directors and System staff.* Five focus groups were conducted for member library directors and System staff by facilitator Patricia Stocker. The committee discussed Ms. Stocker's report and focus group responses to System services as the services are valued, used, and considered essential. The committee then reviewed page 15 of the focus group report (the 3-5 most essential services: interlibrary loan and/or delivery, information technology, consultant services, technical services, and rotating collections, with a few votes for continuing education). Committee comments include:

-- Jim Sleeth – STLS needs to focus on core services; perhaps the state expects too much

-- Joan Tavernier said that small libraries rely on information technology services for upkeep and troubleshooting. Bigger libraries are perceived to have more staff and less need; directors of larger libraries said that IT support was also important for them. There was discussion of the balance of responsibilities between members and the system.

-- Information technology can be extremely broad. STLS needs to define and clarify what services are provided

-- “When I need computer help, I need computer help”

-- Interlibrary Loan/Delivery and Consultant Services are important

-- Rotating collections are important. What is the difference between interlibrary loan and rotating collections? Rotating collections provide materials for browsing and for patrons who don’t search online. Rotating collections are meant to complement local collections, not replace them. Audio and large print collections are important. Books on CD are too expensive to buy locally; we send patrons to the rotating collection. The weeding of the collections that was done was wonderful.

-- Rotating collections are hidden outreach services – meeting the needs of people coming in the door

-- Mid-York Library System makes bulk loans of large print and videos to libraries on a 2-3 month basis

-- Pioneer Library System. Libraries pay \$150/\$200 per year per rotating collection and have to subscribe for a 2 year period. At monthly selection meetings, directors choose titles for the popular reading collections. Large print and audio titles are basically on standing order.

-- In addition various Pioneer libraries make bulk loans of large print and/or audio books to other members. Karen Deutsch said that some libraries made bulk loans to other because they needed the shelf space for new items

-- Harriet Eisman uses large print and audio collections; selection meetings would be one more meeting to attend

-- Would STLS members be willing to pay for rotating collections? If they had to pay for rotating collections, Fillmore would drop a few, as would Watkins Glen, Wayland, maybe Dundee. Montour Falls would reduce the number and pay

-- What percentage of a rotating collection is fairly new? Lorie Brown said that it is different for every collection.

-- What is STLS prepared to provide? What are member responsibilities, System responsibilities?

-- Delivery is essential, like breathing

-- While Continuing Education was a very low priority for the focus groups, need depends on the topic. For example, CE is a part of information technology, strengthening skills that libraries need for internal maintenance. Classes on troubleshooting computers would change over time.

-- It’s important to define the services; libraries don’t always know what is covered by a service

-- Karen Deutsch said that if Delivery were taken out of the equation, the priorities would be Information Technology, Consultant Services, and Rotating Collections

-- Jim Sleeth pointed out that Outreach is not on the list, took a historical perspective

-- There are parallels between the focus group responses and annual evaluations of STLS services

-- Consultant services. A member library need fluctuates over time; evaluation of System services can vary depending on when interviewed

-- Some think that larger libraries contribute to smaller libraries for library materials, funding for the IT consultant

*Central Library Plan.* Owen Frank reviewed Central Library Book Aid (\$71,500) which is spent for adult non-fiction (available for holds system-wide) and print reference. Central Library Development Aid (\$105,000) is used to provide reference service for members, Sunday hours in the winter at Steele, Best of the Web, and member workshops.

*Service Priorities.* Karen Deutsch said that technical processing is a nice luxury that could be a member responsibility. Jim Sleeth emphasized that technical processing is essential for Chemung County. Brian Hildreth said that the Mid-York Library System provides processing and cataloging; cataloging is essential and needs to be centralized. Ristiina Wigg said that STLS sees cataloging as a System responsibility. Processing would be an issue of space and staff and materials costs for members. What percentage of STLS processing costs are covered by fees? STLS processing is better than Baker & Taylor's. Wellsville orders their books with Mylar jackets.

*Discussion of Fees.* Jim Sleeth asked why there are not fees for all services; the choice to charge fees for some services seems arbitrary. (Currently libraries pay STLS fees to support the information technology program and fees per item for physical processing.) The previous director of the Howe Library, Wellsville, had suggested a service fee per library that would cover all services. Brian Hildreth would not like to see the System charge a general fee; it would be discriminatory and would result in denial of services to members who need them. Others said that a library might need assistance with a charter change or grant writing expertise; why charge a fee for those services? Harriet Eisman commented on the balance between "What do I need every day?" and services that are not needed every day, but when you need them, you need them.

*Next steps:* Two subcommittees will meet.

(1) Central Library Services – including Owen Frank, Brian Hildreth, Jim Sleeth

(2) Outside funding for STLS – including Karen Deutsch

STLS staff will work with the committee discussion, focus group results and Division of Library Development outline to create a draft plan of service for review and revision by the committee. The next draft will be posted on the STLS web page, sent to directors and Board presidents for comment, and presented to county library groups. *How else to encourage participation of and communication with member libraries?*. Perhaps hold a general discussion meeting. Attract members with a provocative title such as “Charging for rotating collections & other Plan of Service Issues.” The final Plan of Service draft must be ready by early September for consideration at the STLS September Board meeting.