

School Library Journal Summit

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November 30 – December 1, 2007, Phoenix, Arizona

Compiled by Sandy Kelly, with excerpts from the SLJ Summit Wiki <http://sljsummit.pbwiki.com/>

The Arizona Biltmore Hotel was the beautiful setting for third School Library Journal Leadership Summit. Known as the "jewel of the desert," every president since Grover Cleveland has stayed here at least once. It was a fabulous location to discuss "Where's the Evidence? Understanding the Impact of School Libraries." LEFT: Brian Kenney of School Library Journal greets the Massachusetts contingent: Sandy Kelly, Ann Perham, Valerie Diggs. Taking the photo, Kathy Lowe.

The keynote speaker was Linda Perlstein, author of *Tested: One American School Struggles to Make the Grade* (Holt, 2007). Linda Perlstein worked at The Washington Post from 1994 to 2004, most of that time writing about education and children. Her latest book, *Tested* examines the costs and benefits of the standards-based testing movement, through the real-life stories of the staff and students at a high-poverty Maryland elementary school. RIGHT: The Summit was a very full program of presentations, breakout sessions, and discussions. Ann Perham and Valerie Diggs consider the ideas of one of many terrific speakers.

Following Linda was a panel discussion, "Evidence Across the Profession". Panelists included David Watkins, Chair & Senior Principal, WHR Architects, Houston, and author of an upcoming book from Wiley on evidence-based architectural and design practice; Jonathan Eldredge, Associate Professor for the School of Medicine and the Health Sciences Library and Informatics at the University of New Mexico and author of 21 articles and seven book chapters on Evidence-Based Library and Information Practice (EBLIP); and Lindsay Glynn, Health Sciences Library, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Editor-in-Chief of the open-access journal Evidence Based Library and Information Practice. It was fascinating to hear from people other than those directly involved in school libraries how evidence based practice can be used to improve and build advocacy for our programs as well.

Later on Friday and Saturday morning we met in small groups to hear and discuss case studies of different evidence-based practice projects in school libraries. In all, there were eight different case studies presented.

LEFT: The Arizona Biltmore was the perfect site for the SLJ Summit '08. The Massachusetts contingent included Valerie Diggs, Sandy Kelly, Kathy Lowe and Ann Perham.

Saturday breakfast speaker was Peter Pearson; "Just Because They Love You Doesn't Mean They'll Fund You." Peter speaks nationally on library advocacy and fundraising. He is president of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library in Minnesota, a group that is unique in two ways. First, the organization is both a Friends' group and a library foundation. And second, the organization is in the fortunate position of having endowments of approximately \$14 million. The mission of the 60 year-old organization is to offer programming; to conduct lobbying in support of strong public funding; and to raise private funds. Last year, the organization provided the library over \$1.7 million in financial assistance. The organization has just completed raising \$6 million for a \$20 million public/private capital campaign to renovate the interior of its 80 year-old Central Library in downtown Saint Paul. Peter has a master's degree in educational administration and has been a classroom teacher, school principal, and executive director of two non-profit educational programs prior to taking this position as President of The Friends and Foundation of the Saint Paul Public Library. He spoke about how he started a group that assessed needs and relentlessly pursued funding for their library's program.

Finally the busy two days ended with the closing session with Dr. Ross Todd. Ross led the entire group in reflecting on, discussing, questioning, and synthesizing what we had experienced over the past two days. RIGHT: Dinner conversation was rich and rewarding for Valerie Diggs, Sara Kelly Johns (AASL President) and Evan St. Lifer (Scholastic Executive).