Sessions Attended at WLA on Wednesday, October 22 and Thursday, October 23

Keynote Speaker, Dasha Kelly Hamilton, is the Poet Laureate Emerita for both the City of Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin. Her talk (The Creative Change Agent) included her career work as a community builder, teaching artist and multi-hyphenate creative. She spoke about the dynamic impact of creativity as a community building strategy. Her message was very emotional and uplifting and gave the audience plenty to contemplate.

Bridging the Generations: Building Stronger Library Teams

Sadly, this session did not provide any information I was not already familiar with, and while the sessions are scheduled for an hour each, the presenter was done after 30 minutes. Those of us in attendance were disappointed with both the presenter and her content.

The Gentle Art of Handling Tricky Patrons

This session was excellent and provided the audience with plenty of opportunity to share their experiences. Tricky patrons aren't problem patrons, but rather those who may be two steps off from reality, nosy, or parasocial. They visit or call and take up staff time with trivial conversation. It was refreshing to hear from other librarians who shared their experiences and tricks for dealing with tricky patrons. I left this session with some new strategies.

I Seek Dead People: How to Serve Genealogists at Your Library

This worthwhile session presented librarians with practical tips for handling tricky genealogy reference requests and exploring databases that make genealogy and local history research easier. I learned about resources I wasn't familiar with and left with ideas for some engaging genealogical programs.

Building Sustainable Libraries for Stronger Communities

The presenter discussed how libraries can be meaningful catalysts of community resilience and social cohesion in the face of disruptions large and small--like when extreme weather strikes or when patrons who are disconnected and lonely turn to the library for connections. She provided examples of ways libraries can expand their roots in their local community. She also shared information about the Sustainable Libraries Initiative, of which our library is currently a member.

Beyond Cardholders: How to Research and Serve the 80% Not Using Your Library

This session focused on the strategic planning process that the Warren-Newport Library in Illinois undertook to understand its full community amid shifting demographics, including a growing immigrant population and more financially stressed households. The research gathered helped the library inform changes to programs, polices, staffing, and outreach.