

REACTIONS FROM PANEL MEMBERS

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I want to tell you what my reactions were to this morning's program as a library user, and as the former Head of Library Development at the State Library of Iowa. Iowa is a rural state. It does not have as large a population as Pennsylvania does, but it certainly has as many libraries. Iowa has approximately 512 libraries, and 85 percent of these libraries are located in towns with less than 5,000 people. Many Iowa librarians feel isolated, but this problem also exists in urban areas.

I had the distinct pleasure of writing a grant that was funded by the State Council in Iowa for the Des Moines Public Library. The title of this project was "Confluence of People and Resources."

Des Moines is a river town. The grant produced an historical walking tour of the town. This was taped so that individuals could carry a cassette recorder and take the tour independently. Large groups have also taken the tour. This project was very successful. It introduced newcomers to Des Moines to the city's history and its historical buildings. It provided a sense of place and explained how Des Moines grew.

I was struck by what Tom Phelps said about the humanities and how they involved the search for connections. I think we should consider the connections that exist between people. We need to celebrate the differences that exist in our country because they are what makes America great. As we celebrate our differences,

we can learn to appreciate our similarities. The two things result in expanding our tolerance and that is very important, because expanding our tolerance improves the quality of our lives. I think that may be a basic need for all of us--that desire to help in creating a caring community.

I think that the library represents a perfect marketing vehicle for sharing some non-competitive aspects of our lives. Many of us face a very strong competitive situation in our place of work. We need to have someplace where we can compare our differences and similarities in a non-competitive way. Perhaps the library should sponsor programs which would allow us to do this. Every community is unique in some way and every library's collection is unique.

I remember from my days at the State Library that in-kind contributions are a difficult concept to understand. We should think of it as bartering. We barter time and abilities. If we think of in-kind contributions as a type of bartering, then it is far easier to understand how this fits into a large grant.