## **Eureka Leadership Institute**

The mission of the Eureka Leadership Institute is to develop future leaders for California libraries and for the library profession, to help California library staff become leaders in the communities they serve, and to promote the profession as a force for positive change in society. I was one of 36 library professionals competitively selected for participation in "an intense transformative experience that will expose them to top thinkers and guide them through a rigorous process of individual and group self-analysis and planning" (Eureka! Process, para. 1). Modeled on the "Library Leadership Institute" launched in 1991 at Snowbird by Becky Schrieber and John Shannon (http://web.mac.com/jandb.mac/iWeb/Schreiber%20Shannon%20Associates/Home.html), the Institute delivered the promised difference from traditional multi-day trainings or conferences. Each segment of the multi-day curriculum built to make a final impact on the last day. The emphasis on small group work will involve a very high level of intensity, group bonding, and risk-taking. With the exception of Sunday, we met daily from 8 AM until 9 PM; all meals were shared, and the evenings included such inspirational and dynamic speakers as Cultural Anthropologist Jennifer James (Thinking in the Future Tense http://www.jenniferjames.com/lectures/index.htm#thinking), the film Bolero and the sharing of personal and professional journeys by the eight designated mentors. The event was opened by State Librarian Susan Hildreth and closed by Head of the National Endowment for the Arts Dana Gioia who reviewed the recently published findings of the compelling study "To Read or Not to Read" (<a href="http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf">http://www.nea.gov/research/ToRead.pdf</a>).

The stated objectives of the Institute were to examine personal leadership style and plan developmental strategies, to access the environment and develop a vision for the future of California libraries, to clarify personal and professional goals to actively pursue that vision, to gain knowledge and skills needed for effective leadership in a constantly changing market, to identify strategies to empower self and others, to develop a network of peers for ongoing work and coordination, to develop a higher level of confidence in achieving leadership potential, and to commit to an action plan for implementing a project to position local library as a critical entity in the community. As an added boon, the California State Library announced the commitment of \$5,000 to each participating library to implement the identified project. A simplified LSTA application will be required; however, it will be valuable in both studying library staffing and library processes and in implementing changes.

Each topical area was introduced with an interactive presentation by the facilitators followed by individual reflection in writing and structured group activities designed to anchor and personalize the process. The larger group of 36 was divided into four groups of nine; each group was supported by two mentors. Mentors for my group were Deputy State Librarian Stacy Aldrich and LSSI (privatized library services) executive Mark Smith. Both were extraordinary in sharing, supporting, clarifying, confronting, and pushing for growth. Although I found the entire process extremely valuable, I found the focus on selecting strategic priorities very useful. I believe it is a process from which we at Woodland Public Library will benefit tremendously. There will be a reunion in one year where each participant will present his/her completed project with assessment of impact. At that time one Board Member will also be invited to attend.

Eureka Institute Vision:

"21st century public libraries throw open their doors to celebrate & empower California's evolving communities. Our libraries embrace the responsibility to be forward thinking, using resources to encourage people to discover their collective voice in pursuit of individual passions. Eureka! library leaders energize this vision by courageously leading through example & starting the essential conversation."