

**Director of County Library Services
For
March 2011**

IN MEMORIAM: I would like to acknowledge the loss of Marin Supervisor Charles McGlashan, a steadfast supporter of our libraries, who died March 27 of an apparent heart attack at age 49. MCFL is governed by the Board of Supervisors and Charles attacked all our issues with enthusiasm, whether it was support for the library tax measure or taking on the large publishers over digital management rights. He will be deeply missed.

BRANCHES (Ongoing tidbits about happenings around the system)

e-BRANCH: Project Gutenberg is a volunteer effort to digitize and archive cultural works, to "encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks." Founded in 1971 by Michael S. Hart, it is the oldest digital library and most of the items in its collection are the full texts of public domain (that is, out of copyright.) As of November 2010, Project Gutenberg had over 34,000 items in its collection and they are now conveniently available for download via our OverDrive Digital Collection: <http://ebranch.marinlibrary.org/2D721F40-4E39-49B0-B195-855368D546F8/10/629/en/PublicDomainCollection.htm> using a single click check-out. They never expire and don't count against the OverDrive Library checkout limit. In March, our Project Gutenberg eBooks and other materials in the OverDrive Digital Collection totaled 1520 checkouts. By comparison, in December 2010, the Stinson Beach Library circulated 1349 items. It's likely that circulation of digital materials will continue to grow over the coming months and we are carefully watching the statistics.

FAIRFAX: The Fairfax Library recently installed some very nice end panels from Ross McDonald. A total of 16 were installed and will be used for attractive displays and merchandising. This was Branch Manager Gail Wireman's final project and was installed three days after she retired.

The AARP tax assistance has been very popular. Volunteers have frequently been staying later than advertised and advanced bookings were filled up two weeks before the end of tax season.

WEST MARIN: To the delight of their patrons, Bolinas now has self-pickup of holds to go along with their newly installed self-check station. That means they are four-for-four: all four small branches have self check and self-service holds and nobody has e-term (our old DOS based blue screen terminal) anywhere. Welcome to the 21st century, West Marin!

On March 11, we all awoke to the devastating news about the earthquake in Japan and simultaneously, a tsunami watch for the coastal areas of West Marin. A quick call to Marin County Fire revealed that we were probably safe, but everyone along the coast was nervous. Beaches and schools in Stinson Beach and Bolinas were closed, so when Kerry Livingston (CLS) and Bonny White (Senior Librarian) got to the Stinson Beach Library at 9 a.m. there were already patrons waiting in the parking lot. The library really served as the center of our community that awful day as everyone stopped in to share their feelings of grief and worry for the people of Japan and gratitude that our coastal communities were safe.

Then on Thursday, March 24th, there was a huge storm in West Marin. Bonny was headed to her usual Thursday morning radio appearance when a power outage knocked KWMR off the air. Within minutes, the radio station was back up; running on generator power, but everybody else in Point Reyes, Olema, Inverness, and Marshall was without power. The first estimate was that the lights would come on in Point Reyes by 1:00 - and luckily, it was a closed day for Inverness anyway. Believing we'd have power at any moment, we opened in Point Reyes, but by 5:00, there was still no power, it was getting chilly, and PG&E issued a new estimate of 11:00 p.m., so we finally gave up and closed. No sooner had Bonny sent staff home than miraculously, the power was restored. She estimates that our total actual closure at Point Reyes lasted for five minutes, with patrons streaming back into the library the second the lights came on.

NOVATO: The Novato Youth Center has an on-line Novato School Readiness Calendar that features pre-literacy activities around the city and is shared with the Mothers Club, the Latino Council and others in the community. The calendar now includes the library's Lapsit and Baby & Me story times, getting our message out and encouraging a new group of users to explore what the library has for them.

CORTE MADERA: On Monday March 14th there was a major "police action" at the Bank of America across from the Library that started in the afternoon and went on until well after the library closed. The intersection of Tamalpais Dr./Sanford/Madera was closed off for several hours. Access by car to the library parking lot was not possible but pedestrians could come to the Library from the south and many people watched the action through the Library windows. Patrons and staff were free to leave—the police did not interfere but directed people where to go. Nancy Davis (Branch Manager) went to the "State of the Town" luncheon later that week, at which the Police Chief spoke. He said there were over 400 people out in the street watching at one point in the evening! Luckily, most staff was parked in areas that were still accessible and could leave at the regular 9 p.m. closing time. Only one librarian could not get to her car at closing, so her husband had to come and get her at a colleague's. Interestingly, we discovered that the most extensive and timely coverage of the bank incident was the Larkspur-Corte

Madera Patch, AOL's on-line "hyper-local" news source. I was personally very surprised to turn the 6 p.m. news on at home for a few minutes just in time to see pictures of the SWAT team surrounding the bank, with the library in the background. Not as exciting, but also out of the ordinary, on Sunday March 20th, power went out on at about 4 p.m. and the library closed for the rest of the day at 4:30 p.m.

In Reach and Out Reach. Lion Dancers from the Marin Chinese Cultural Association appeared in the Library on March 19th in observance of Chinese New Year's. Very noisy and lots of fun! A patron took a photo and posted it on the Larkspur-Corte Madera *Patch*. Nancy Davis spoke at the Central Marin Rotary Club at the Left Bank in Larkspur on March 21st, and the audience seemed especially interested in our offering of e-books and e-audios.

OUTREACH: March was a busy month for outreach. All three senior book clubs started successfully, 30+ in the Spanish speaking and 25 in the English language book clubs. Small Press Distributors, our partner, is very happy and has applied for another grant, hopefully including MCFL in the continuation of the senior book clubs. The seniors involved have been waiting for us to start these clubs are thrilled to be included. We look forward to continuing the great partnerships with the Margaret Todd Center and the San Geronimo Center.

Marin Women's Commission partnership, teen girl conference and follow up parent education event went extremely well as they staffed a table at each event. Over 100 girls were surveyed about their library habits and the information will be presented next month at the teen librarian meeting.

BOOKMOBILE: Despite W.C. Fields famous quote, "Never work with animals or children", this March the Bookmobile did just that! By combining a generous private donation and funds from our ever popular Marin County Friends of the Library, we were able to bring an amazing educational program to our three one room school houses. The program is called Wild things Inc and is dedicated to working with children and folks of all ages. Check them out at <http://wildthingsinc.org/> The kids, families and teachers assembled at Laguna School and were awestruck by the visiting animals---a lemur, horned owl, vulture, kangaroo, rattlesnake and a 6 foot alligator! All of these creatures live on a reserve that Wild Things operates and cannot be returned to the wild so they have become educational ambassadors for the animal kingdom. A highpoint for the kids (and adults!) was the opportunity to come up and touch the alligator (not the mouth end!) and pet the kangaroo, Billy. Here are some of the comments from the kids: "My favorite part was to touch the alligator. It felt all bumpy." Matthew (4th) "I loved all of the animals. I thought that the most exciting part was getting to pet a few animals. I really couldn't decide which one was my favorite. I enjoyed it a lot and I hope you did too." Seleste (4th) "Thank you for inviting Wild Things to Laguna School. It was COOL!" Gracie (5th) "I like how we had the opportunity to pet the kangaroo. It felt like what a cloud should feel like." Maegin (5th) "I like the rattlesnake. I like the rattle." Saul (K) And in case you think this doesn't tie into books, just guess what the 80 books requested were the next day.....

TECHNICAL SERVICES: Tec has a new re-binding machine designed to re-glue paperbacks—it's especially great for extending the life of large format paperbacks on topics like gardening and how-to. Basically, it heats the spine of a book, melts away the old glue, they put in a hard piece of glue (looks like a stick of gum) and re-heat, and the new glue is both more flexible and stronger than the original glue. This is especially exciting, as some new large format paperbacks these days seem to start falling apart after one or two checkouts. As the old WWII posters used to say *Use It Up, Wear It Out, Make It Do!*

MEDIA MENTIONS: 75 listings total! We saw more big news items this month, than in the last 6 months combined. There were 19 brief mentions, calendar items and postings of library hours in the Marin IJ, as well as a feature article “Marin Library offers cutting-edge access to vintage material”, by Gary Klien, on 3/27/11. In addition, there was a special Reader’s Forum: “Support our Libraries” by Fredericka Cobey, President of the Marin County Free Library, on 3/28/11. Our regional news reporting is now expanded to include reporting from online venues – 28 notices in the West Marin Citizen, 18 in the Point Reyes Light, 3 in the Ross Valley Reporter (including (including Cutting for Stone is this year’s One Book One Marin reading assignment”, by Jennifer Gennari, 3/23/11,) 1 San Rafael News Pointer, and 1 listing in the San Anselmo-Fairfax Patch. In addition, 1 special MCFL promotion in the Novato-Patch: “Library Offers Free E-Books for your iPad or Smart Phone”, posted by Brent Ainsworth, 3/16/11.

PERSONNEL: With the retirement of Gail Wiemann, Damon Hill (Acting Administrative Librarian) is spending two days a week the Fairfax Library, supporting the staff until we can permanently fill the branch manager’s position. We are in line at Human Resources and hope to open recruitment in the near future.

DONATIONS: The following donations were taken to the Board of Supervisors:

1. \$750 from the Marin County Library Foundation for Library Services & Children’s Programs. Approved @ 03/22 BOS meeting
2. \$6,000 from the Marin County Library Foundation for equipment to assist with communicating the library’s activities to the public. Approved @ 3/22 BOS meeting.
3. \$5,000 from Bolinas Stinson Beach Library Improvement Society (BSBLIS) to enrich the collections of the Bolinas and Stinson Beach branches. Will be used to purchase books & music CDs. Approved @ 3/29 BOS meeting.
4. \$500 from the Friends of the Novato libraries to the Novato library. Will be used to purchase children’s board books. Will be approved @ 4/5 BOS meeting.

BUDGET: March 23rd was the MCFL budget hearing before the Board of Supervisors. (The entire hearing is available on line on the County website.) I began by outlining our accomplishments for 2010-11, based on our Managing for Results plan: establishment of a Citizen’s Advisory Committee for Measure “A;” increased the number of Early Learning programs; announced our downloadable eBook, AudioBook and video collections; expanded the shared materials collection; completed accessibility projects in Corte Madera, Novato and Fairfax; focused on developing new website and social medial outreach; 3,800 children, teens and adults participated in the Library’s Summer

Reading Program. Our Plan Goals for 2011-12 are Connect with Reading (capitalize on our “reading” brand) and emphasize development of local content; Engage Our Community (increase collaboration with the businesses and non-profits ;) Rethink our Spaces for Better Community Use (complete our required ADA modifications and reconfigure some of our library spaces for simpler and easier use ;) Improve the Customer Experience (increased staff training and working with HR to develop flexible staffing patterns ;) Focus on Services for Youth (emphasize both the excellent service we have provided children and teens in the past and promises to extend it in the future.) I moved into “What does our future look like?” and talked some about addressing the changing needs of our patrons, maintaining our current hours of operation and dealing with the long-term funding challenges as Measure “A” expires in 5 years. I reminded the Board that we are adapting to rapid technological change and managing aging facilities. Finally, I showed them a bar graph to emphasize the fact that using the same assumptions as the County for property tax growth and increases in staffing and other costs, we will begin the fiscal year 2015/16 (the year that Measure “A” expires) with a deficit of nearly \$3 million. In the next 4 years we will need to trim costs and prioritize services simply to be in a position to return to the voters to renew our current parcel tax measure and not to ask for an increase.

ONE BOOK ONE MARIN: On April 27th Dr. Michael Krasny will be interviewing Dr. Abraham Verghese, the author of “Cutting for Stone.” Dr. Verghese is polished, inspirational speaker so don’t miss this opportunity to be involved in our “community wide book club.”

ALL STAFF DAY: Each year in the spring we bring everyone together for a day of training and staff recognition. Since we work in ten different locations and hours spanning seven days a week, this gives a unique opportunity to talk face to face with folks we may mainly know from e-mail or telephone calls. ASD is always on a Friday, to minimize any disruption to public service, so on April 1st we all met at Pickleweed Community Center for the day. I gave a “State of the Library” report, sharing with staff my report to the Board of Supervisors; we bid farewell to three retiring employees, recognized with an MCFL t-shirt our new staff members, and presented a rose to all of our 20 year and longer veterans. Committee members updated us on our website redesign, our social media and communications projects and our summer reading program for 2011. For the first time this year we had “poster sessions” hung around the room and during breaks we could see some of the exciting things that are going on both at the system and branch level. (The paperback gluing machine – see my TEC report – was a huge hit!) The highlight of the day was a three-session series of talks and breakout groups facilitated by Joan Frye Williams. Joan is a local consultant and futurist who engaged us all in a provocative series of exercises, thinking about “hyper-local” libraries, libraries keyed to life situations and ideas to engage our communities.