

**Director of County Library Services Report  
For  
December 2011**

**GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING**

The expected post-holiday rush of new eReader owners has started appearing in the branches. Corte Madera reports a greatly increased number of questions relating to downloading our e-content as do the other branches. Classes are scheduled around the system to teach folks how to access and download our eContent. Check them out at <http://marinlibrary.org/events-and-programs>.

Civic Center is the largest MCFL branch open on Friday and December 30<sup>th</sup> was a banner day for new library cards; almost every other person wanted one! Perhaps to check out our e-books? Perhaps to take advice of our new Lucky Day browsing collection? And speaking of the Lucky Day collection, the Fairfax branch has been inundated with patrons telling the how much they love it!

The Collection Development Team continues to look at emerging eBook vendors and has two potential new services under serious consideration for MCFL—both designed for tablet/Smartphone users, which are predicted to be the eReader of choice 2-3 years out. *Axis360* is a tablet eBook service from Baker&Taylor, a major book vendor for libraries, and is designed for use with iPads, iPhones, iPod Touches, PCs and Macs. It's good for full color layout eBooks like cookbooks, travel books, and children's picture books. Look for us to begin a trial version in January or as soon thereafter as it is available. *Axis360* is the public library version of the retail product *Blio*. For a preview, go to <https://www.blio.com/blio/screens/homepage.jsp>. *Zinio* is a digital magazine service coming from a long-time library vendor Recorded Books and we are looking to start out with a small digital magazine collection next fiscal year (July, 2012.) We would be able to buy one digital subscription of a magazine from *Zinio* and provide access to unlimited simultaneous users as long as those users are in our jurisdiction. It would be possible for branches to have in-house iPads or Android tablets for patrons who want to come in and read their favorite monthly in-house. Also for use with tablets, PCs, and Smartphones (iPhone and Android), *Zinio* is a retail application now—for a preview go to <http://www.zinio.com/> *Zinio* is good for viewing full color photo-rich publications like National Geographic or People. The eContent world is changing so fast that sometimes we feel like Alice did in Wonderland. *Well, in our country," said Alice, still panting a little, "you'd generally get to somewhere else -- if you ran very fast for a long time, as we've been doing." "A slow sort of country!" said the Queen. "Now, here, you see, it takes all the running you can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!" (Through the Looking Glass, Chapter 2)*

Teressa Snyder (Library Desk Supervisor, Civic Center) reported that one of the visitors to the Civic Center Building and Library in late December was children's author-illustrator Greg Foley who visited the Civic Center building and library with his camera to take photos of the library. He asked if we had any of his books and was happy to know that we did. Six actually – including Good Luck Bear, Willoughby & the Moon, and his latest Purple Little Bird. At a December literacy evening at Lu Sutton School in Novato, a darling second grade boy in flannel pj's showed Victoria Gonzalez (CLS, Outreach) to how to read a book on the Nook! Here we go!

## **GOAL 2: ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY**

Corte Madera celebrated the 40th anniversary of their current building on Meadowsweet Drive on Dec. 1. There were displays of various photographs and other materials; cookies, pretzels, cider, and coffee provided by the Friends of the Corte Madera Library; an illustrated talk about the history of the Library from California Room Librarian Laurie Thompson; and music that attracted our patrons and members of the community, including Supervisor Kinsey. Staff were on hand to chat and explain some of the displays. A good time was had by all; one couple even danced to the guitar music provided by a local musician! Staff prepared a booklist, "40 Years of Good Reading," consisting of Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winners since 1971, which proved very popular.

Victoria Gonzalez created a quilt with families from Corte Madera in early December to be displayed then delivered to Oakland Children's Hospital. We will continue to add these art/outreach projects throughout the year at our libraries. These are great family events and there is always a packed room!

Currently at the Point Reyes Library are hand-embroidered art pieces by local artist Sheila Bryant. Sheila is an acquaintance of the new TBLA (Tomales Bay Library Association) President, Laura Scott, who put in a good word for us. This artist only rarely shows her work, so the branch feels honored to have this beautiful display. Speaking of TBLA, this Friends group was hard at work in December, developing a new website and writing a holiday appeal letter. The appeal letter went out just in time, and the response has been gratifying with new members coming onboard and donations of over \$6000, after expenses.

Fairfax had a standing-room-only program on the history of Fairfax, given by the author Bill Sagar. As he showed slides of bygone days and identified their locations, there would be audible sighs of recognition as the watchers' perspectives adjusted.

## **GOAL 3: RETHINK OUR SPACES FOR BETTER COMMUNITY USE**

The Novato Courtyard accessibility plan has been officially approved and the bid process will begin shortly. We don't have dates yet, but it probably will be about 3-5 weeks before the bid is awarded. Once the contractor is selected, we will need to work closely on details to prepare for the construction. This project is being funded with money from the Novato Downtown Redevelopment Fund. The Redevelopment Districts are currently slated to be discontinued and the tax dollars they generated transferred to the school districts so we are anxious to have the project completed soon, although we have been reassured that projects in the pipeline should be secure.

## **GOAL 4: IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

Novato now has two new full-time employees on board – Janet Doerge, Senior Librarian – Branch Manager and Jennifer Robinson, Librarian II – Children’s. Janet comes to us with a wealth of experience in East Coast libraries and Jennifer has relocated from Seattle. They are both bursting with energy and ideas and are busy getting to know their colleagues and their new community. Stop in and say hello if you are in the neighborhood.

The Civic Center branch is the home of an extensive collection of microforms and a number of readers. One of their newer machines is a ST200X scanner that allows patrons to scan in images from the microfilm and then e-mail it to themselves for editing. However, because the PDF files that the scanner produced were inordinately large, they were difficult and sometimes impossible for patrons to attach to email. After extensive communication with support staff from Total Imaging Solutions, Civic Center staff was able to resolve the issue. The result was a very gratified patron, and staff trained to demonstrate the new scanning procedure to patrons in the future. Now that’s excellent customer service!

In November a few of us attended the California Library Association meetings in Pasadena. (The yearly conference alternates between Northern and Southern California and we tend to send more staff in the San Jose or Sacramento years.) Conference is an opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues around the state, to visit vendors and learn about new products and to participate in shaping the future of our library world. As outgoing chair of the California County Librarians Association, I spent some time with other County librarians from around the State and despite all the economic problems found people more positive than last year. Budgets aren’t any better and many are cutting staff and services, but there is also energy around focusing on what is most needed in their communities. Amanda Foust (Electronic Services Librarian II) was part of a panel that focused on the upcoming Summer Reading Program “Nighttime.” Among us we attended presentations on e-Books, new models for public service, and QR codes, among others. The former State Librarian, Susan Hildreth, who was appointed by President Obama to run the Institute for Museum and Librarian Services, spoke to a large crowd about what IMLS is and the opportunities for funding through their grants.

## **GOAL 5: FOCUS ON SERVICES TO YOUTH**

The local a capella group “Til Dawn,” which consists of young people and is supported by the Youth in Arts program, sang in the Corte Madera children’s room on Saturday, December 3. The Marin City Webstars attended and videotaped the performance.

Last summer, the Corte Madera branch partnered with Hillside Church in Corte Madera to participate in the “Traveling Postcards” project, in which local children and adults attended a workshop and created postcards for children living at the Casa de La Esperanza, a Mexican orphanage in Tijuana sponsored by the church. These postcards were hand delivered to the orphanage by members of the church, and the children in the orphanage made cards in return, recently delivered to the branch by one of the local coordinators of the project. These cards are on display in the Corte Madera lobby and then will go on to Fairfax and finally Novato. This project combined art and global sharing from our children to those at the orphanage.

December is the time of year when our Bookmobile folks get to see some of the Christmas performances at Marin’s little one room school houses. Union School (all nine kids plus one “visiting preschooler”) performed their cliffhanger play about the year when the reindeer refused

to fly. What will Santa and the elves do? Why, call the “Reindeer Whisperer” of course! Enter Cesar Salad (accent on the second syllable!) who finds out what is bothering our young reindeer and solves the problem in his amazing Spanish accent! The sleigh leaves with a few false starts---backwards cardboard cutout which was quickly turned around. Feelings are soothed and Christmas goes on as scheduled! Lincoln School performed a shortened version of The Grinch Who Stole Christmas. The Grinch (aka Gracie) gets extra points for scaling her mountain home overlooking Whoville----the mountain was a stepladder covered with white snow capped paper and took some athletic ability to manage! Laguna School performed 2 of their dance and singing numbers which were active and hilarious. Circling children were “caught “by the bridges they ducked under and then became bridges determined to catch others. The bridge avoiding tactics were amazing to watch but soon all were caught. The laughing and good natured fun are such a joy to see. Kudos to the Bookmobile staff for weaving their books and storytelling into the fabric of life in the one room schools!

**DONATIONS:** At the Board of Supervisors meeting December 6<sup>th</sup> I asked to have two items pulled from the consent calendar so I could recognize two very special donations to the Library. Joan Brown, recently retired long-time volunteer coordinator for the County asked that any gifts at her retirement party be used to support MCFL’s Library Beyond Walls Program. Both of us spoke briefly about the program and the Supervisors were quite complimentary. After that Ambre Dailey, program coordinator for the FLAGship (Families Learning and Growing) program came up to the podium with me as I acknowledged the generous \$25,000 gift from the Marin Literacy Program Board that enables FLAGship to maintain a full schedule through June, despite State and First Five funding cutbacks. Since responsibility for the FLAGship program has been transferred from the San Rafael Library to MCFL, I was proud to show that we were encouraging public/private partnerships to maintain our services. The third donation that day was passed on the Consent Calendar with no discussion, but it was a very significant contribution in the amount of \$838 from the Tomales Spanish Book Club for use by the Tomales Spanish Language Book Club.

We recently received a donation, made to the Foundation, in honor of the Fairfax staff, from an older woman who has been a regular patron for years; she now has macular degeneration and staff helps her pick out books on CD. We don’t expect such generous thanks for customer service, but it is always heartening to be recognized.

**MEDIA MENTIONS:**

In December the Marin IJ published 13 Brief//In Your Town mentions and there were an additional 4 calendar mentions in different publications. The local Patch on-line newspapers do an increasingly good job with library coverage and usually include some sort of visual, which makes our articles stand out. The San Anselmo/Fairfax edition and the Novato edition ran 4 articles about our book clubs, tutoring and Branch Manager Margaret Miles’ blog plus our calendar items. The MarinScope papers ran our 4 events in their various editions. And the West Marin Citizen and the Point Reyes Light had 23 mentions/articles.