

**Director of County Library Services  
For  
December 2010**

**BRANCHES** (Ongoing tidbits about happenings around the system)

**E-BRANCH:** Following up on the *eBooks: Libraries at the Tipping Point* conference and pre-holiday expectations of digital books, OverDrive (our major e-book vendor) has confirmed that the increase of use over the holidays has been staggering. Comparing usage from Nov. 26-28 (around Thanksgiving) to Dec. 25-27 (around Christmas) eBook checkouts increased a staggering 93%, visits to 'Virtual Branch' websites were up 60%, and page views were up nearly 70%" Interestingly, the single most used title is the audio for *The Postmistress* by Sarah Blake

**CORTE MADERA:** DPW installed new lights and a "no loitering" sign at the back entrance to improve safety and discourage people from hanging out there. A leak in the roof which was dripping into light fixture at circulation desk was repaired. And staff put out a very large collection of bookmarks that were returned inside books; patrons could take one or a few as a "Solstice Gift."

**MARIN CITY:** After a few false starts and installation issues, the new, more capacious outdoor book drop is finally installed and many thanks are due to our DPW staff who stuck with the project! Staff at Marin City has replaced their problematic old pencil-and-paper calendar with a Google calendar for staff scheduling. So far it is a terrific tool; everyone including staff at Corte Madera can access it to see who is scheduled, who is at meetings, etc., and also update it quickly as needed. Jill Harris (extra hire L1) has moved ahead with the "Baby Bounce" Early Learning project, having received the check from the Rockey Foundation.

**FAIRFAX:** At long last the Fairfax carpeting project is moving along. The Department of Public Works (DPW) announced the results of the open bidding process and notified us that the low-bid was awarded to On The Surface Flooring from Hayward.

According to DPW, the price was lower than anticipated which is good, but not so low as to be worrisome, which is even better. The contractor has a good reputation and we are confident that things will proceed smoothly. We plan to go to the Board of Supervisors for permission to close the branch Monday February 7<sup>th</sup> for two weeks, with the reopening day Tuesday February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Although we were hoping to be able to roll the carpeting project in with other Measure A related work, it became apparent that the current state of the flooring is so worn, with so many gaps, that a serious safety hazard exists and we need to address it as soon as possible. Staff will have a busy January and February as they organize the myriad details that closing requires, from publicity, to materials handling, to reassigning staff. The results should be worth it – the new carpet tiles are made of sustainable products and the subtle colors will add warmth and light to the library.

In December the Teen collection was moved from its “exile” in the back of the library to its new more central location. New upholstered chairs and playful colorful padded seating called “pebbles” brighten the area and, along with the purple wall, give it a focus. An opening celebration is planned for the new Teen area on Saturday, January 29, with music, food and guests of honor (including the Friends of Fairfax Library, who purchased the new furniture for the branch). Not content to buy furniture just for the Teens, the Friends also bought 8 chairs for the rest of the library, in a similar style and with upholstery in a coordinating color and pattern.

In the space-challenged Children’s Room there is now have a new book cart (also purple!) to display new fiction for children. This created a new space for the children’s comic book/graphic novel collection. Our December art exhibit in the meeting room was “outsider art,” created by students with developmental disabilities from The Cedars of Marin. It attracted several field trips of students and their supporters, and most of the pieces in the exhibit were sold. What a nice connection to make with another organization in the area.

**CIVIC CENTER:** Holiday cheer was abundant at “big pink” this year. To thank their patrons for their year-round support, staff put baskets of little gifts (paid for the CCE Friends) out around the library to show their appreciation. Dru Miller (LA1) is famous in the Civic Center building for her fantastical hats and this year an appreciative patron gave her another to add to her collection. During the pre-holiday rush, while Dru was trying to find a parking place in the upper all day parking area, a man in a pickup backed out of his parking place and blocked the car behind her from zooming around me and stealing the parking place. She doesn’t know if he is a library patron but he certainly is a gentleman. To quote Dru “Every day that starts with a “pay it forward” moment makes me happy and eager to help other people be happy too.” The spirit of Christmas lives...at the public computers! Martha Kassin (L1) helped a patron who was trying to print some articles but discovered she didn't have any cash. She intended to go to the ATM but was afraid she wouldn't get back in time to print her saved documents. A fellow patron gave her \$3. He said she didn't have to pay him back - he'd found himself in a similar situation before - but she got his business card so that she could reimburse him and everyone left feeling good.

**ANNE T. KENT CALIFORNIA HISTORY ROOM:** The California room has a re-designed website! Many, many thanks to Christine Camilleri of the Information Services Department who did the redesign customization and integrated their database content.

(Access is from the MCFL homepage or [californiaroom.marinlibrary.org](http://californiaroom.marinlibrary.org)) Laurie Thompson (LII) and Carol Uhrmacher (L1) have been working behind the scenes for several years to digitize and catalog our primary source materials (a task which will take several lifetimes!). They're using a database called CONTENTdm, used by many research libraries and local history collections to disseminate photographs, oral histories, maps, videos, newspapers & other source materials. CONTENTdm is now integrated with the California Room site and new content will be added on a regular basis. The existing oral histories will all be available and new ones are coming. The oral histories are input as "compound objects" meaning that there are multiple facets to a given record. When you first click on the name (or picture) of an interviewee from the browse mode, you will be taken to the portrait of the individual below which is a catalog description, including a brief biography. If you want to read (or print) the oral history transcript, simply click on "Read the Transcript" from the left-hand menu. A new feature of these records is the inclusion of the complete audio recording as well as one or more audio excerpts. Be sure to go on-line to discover many other new and old favorites! In addition, the CRM is now on Twitter Click to "follow us" from the button at the bottom of the new homepage and you can monitor our tweets from the feed on our "News & Events" page.

**TECHNICAL SERVICES:** Tech has started using the *Wowbrary* newsletter service to inform staff of new additions to the shared collection. It goes to staff email boxes every Saturday and is a quick, easy way for us all to keep up to date on what's going onto our library shelves!

**WEST MARIN:** On January 4, Tech Support confirmed that some long-awaited work to increase network bandwidth at the Bolinas Library had been completed. Public and wireless networks are now separated from the staff network with the result that network speed is now twice what it was in Bolinas. Bolinas CLSs Kerry Livingston and Jane Silvia are very grateful. Having a speedier network will mean they can provide much better customer service to our patrons.

Also, on December 17th, West Marin said a fond farewell to our Spanish Services Librarian Irene Morales. Local book clubs, community members, and library staff came together for a potluck featuring homemade posole and tamales. Everyone shared warm memories with this much-beloved staff member before sending her off to her new job as the Manager of the Pickleweed Branch of the San Rafael Library.

**BOOKMOBILE:** The Bookmobile serves as the school library for the 3 little one room schoolhouses in West Marin. Terry Jones (our intrepid Bookmobilst) is considered part of the family and so is included in all of their different celebrations. The month of December was filled with performances galore Union School (student population: 10) performed their dress rehearsal of "Christmas at the OK Corral" for the Bookmobile. Bubble Gum Bart, the "baddest" outlaw of them all, has forbidden Christmas! If folks celebrate, he'll goo the whole town with bubble gum-----what can the mayor and his wife (played by 2 kindergarteners) do? Call Santa of course who sends in the Candy Cane Kid to have a counseling session with Bart who changes his evil ways just in time for the curtain call. Lincoln School performed "How the Penguins Saved Christmas" complete with ice bergs, penguins and a cast of arctic characters. Christmas is once more saved in the icy north! Laguna School (student population of 30) did an impressive rendering of "The Nutcracker". Gorgeous dancing flowers, Russian dancers, sword fighting

soldiers and mice, a handsome prince and Clara too! Future husbands and wives of these K through 6th graders will bless the teachers who taught every one of them to waltz-----that's after the teachers learned how themselves after watching YouTube Videos. A perfect example of technology providing important information when needed.

**TIPPING POINT CONFERENCE:** A jam-packed room full of staff, Commission and Foundation members and city library staff spent a fascinating day discussing e-books and how they are going to be affecting libraries in the future. MCFL's Collection Development Committee (consisting of Senior Librarians Donna Mettier, Gail Wiemann, Eva Patterson, Nancy Davis and Bonnie White) did a wonderful job selecting for viewing the best of the presentations from Library Journal's day-long virtual conference held last October and then structuring break-out sessions for us to talk about what it all might mean for our local libraries. The goal of the day was to inspire us to all start thinking and imaging and from the conversations afterward, that was accomplished and more so!

**MEDIA MENTIONS:** A quiet month. We had 19 Brief/Calendar mentions (includes 8 postings of library hours) and 1 small item from the IJ's "In Your Town" section. (There were, however, lots of news items this month about the iPad & eReaders in general-- maybe helping to develop the market for MCFL's e-Branch)

**PERSONNEL:** Following our staffing study outline, we have revised the Community Library Specialist (CLS) position to include descriptions for Library Beyond Walls and Volunteer Coordinator. We then combined the hours in several small vacant positions to create 2 full time CLS positions which will be assigned to Marin City and South Novato. This is the first of a series of planned changes that should lead to more flexible staffing patterns and a more targeted use of our professional staff.

**DONATIONS:** A contribution in the amount of \$12,157 from the Friends of the Marin County Free Library to purchase slat wall end panels for the existing shelving at the FAI library was approved at the December 14<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting.

**MEASURE A:** The ballot language for Measure A requires "citizen oversight" be established and on Tuesday December 14th the Board of Supervisors accepted our staff recommendation that the Library Commission be charged with this responsibility. Accordingly, the Commission will sit officially twice a year as the "Measure A Oversight Committee" to ensure that the parcel tax dollars are spent as intended, in January to review MCFL's Managing For Results plan for 2011-12 (essentially our strategic planning document) and then again in the summer to review a yearly Community Report to the voters. This format has the great advantage of having an interested, already educated group of citizens giving feedback and creates efficiencies for staff by focusing their support efforts. All Commission meetings are open and publically noticed and, in addition, I've reached out to the groups that normally attend our strategic planning sessions – the Friends, Foundation, the League of Women Voters – and they will also be attending the January meeting