

Director of County Library Services Report For April 2012

GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING

Fairfax had a standing-room-only, concert-atmosphere turn-out for their “Meet the Author” program Monday April 23. Bill German wrote “Under their Thumb: How a Nice Boy from Brooklyn got Mixed Up with the Rolling Stones (and lived to tell about it).” They had locals, as well as people who drove from miles away to attend, wearing Rolling Stones t-shirts and reminiscing with fellow attendees about the good old days of rock and roll. Every item they put out on display was checked out, and those leaving raved about what a great speaker he was.

An entirely different audience was drawn to hear Teslim, a duo who performed Turkish and Sephardic music, on April 4. Their music was exotic and spellbinding. This was part of the OBOM program. Fairfax also had their book discussion group talking about “Oracle of Stamboul” this month; 19 people showed up, with many newcomers.

On Tuesday April 24 Marin City hosted the author Jacqueline Lockett who spoke about her new book *Passing Love*. She is the also author of the well received book *Searching for Tina Turner*. Over 25 people attended.

Several adults playing the I Spy a Farm game with their children at Civic Center asked if they could buy a frameable copy of the Marvelous Marin map they used and/or asked for the map once the game finished. (Actually they can purchase one, directly from the Anne T. Kent California History Room.) Parents loved the map as much as the kids.

Sparked by an article about a Washington Post peeps diorama contest, Civic Center librarians started putting peeps in their displays, starting with Summer Reading in 2011. Patrons seemed to enjoy the seasonal peeps displays, so they decided to hold their own contest.

“Peeped into any good books recently? In honor of National Library Week let your imagination run to peeps! Enter the Civic Center Library First Annual Peeps Diorama Contest. Create a diorama depicting your favorite book or story using marshmallow peeps. “ After making sample dioramas to give people the idea of what they were looking for, they advertised it like any other program although they did combine it with a craft program to ensure enough entries. There were seventeen entries, mostly children 4 to 13, but also had 3 adult entries (2 county employees collaborated on one winning entry). It became a family affair, when all three members of 2 families submitted dioramas. Among the very creative entries: Harry Peeper and The Help. Hunger Games was a popular theme. The winner was a diorama called the Peepcracker. The creator paid a great deal of attention to the details in her display and it won in the popular voting by a landslide. See all the dioramas at: <http://bit.ly/K3xUNS> The Secret Writer’s Workshop with Frances Lefkowitz is in full swing at the Point Reyes Library. Classes are averaging about 15 very enthusiastic attendees, with two classes left to go.

One Book One Marin concluded an extremely successful season on April 25th. A lovely VIP reception at Dominican’s Alemany Library featured an assortment of Turkish foods and then we moved to Angelico Hall where a large crowd watched radio personality and author Michael Krasny engage Michael Lukas in a wide ranging conversation about the process of writing *The Oracle of Stamboul* and about his experiences as a first time author.

Over the past few years we have noticed that the expensive books we purchase specifically for reference are not getting nearly as much use in the past and have been supplanted in many cases by on-line resources. After taking an on-line training course called “Rethinking Reference” to give them a road map, our librarians began a system wide 10-month internal use count of reference materials that ended on April 30. Next the librarians will examine and interpret the data, and then move to the next steps: reconfiguring the reference collections by weeding, transferring some books to circulation, and shifting the remaining smaller reference collections into new shelving arrangements. We will also use the data to inform future decisions regarding reference purchases and the purchase of reference databases.

GOAL 2: ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

We got one step closer to the long-anticipated increased hours in Stinson Beach and Bolinas when we held interviews last week for the small (15 hr/week) position we need to fill in order to make the new hours work. We had some excellent candidates and as soon as the hiring process is complete we’ll be announcing the date of the change to expanded Mondays and Saturdays in both branches.

Our Second Annual Snapshot Day was held on April 11th during National Library Week and we distributed surveys asking people why they had come to the library, and why the library is important to them. We received over 300 responses - about 80% from patrons 18 or older and about 20% by those younger than 18. The surveys reflected great

support for MCFL and there was high praise for staff and services. Three simple questions were asked:

“Why did you come to the Library today?” The overwhelming response was to get or return materials – as one indicated “Books! DVDs! CDs! Other responses included: “Homework help” “To socialize” “Use the Internet” “I brought my grandson” “Educate myself” “Read newspapers and magazines”

“Please tell us why the Library is important to you” Generally the responses indicated appreciation of various resources and as a community gathering space. “The library is essential to me – to my quality of life – my sanctuary since I was old enough to get to the library by myself” “It is a well spring of information, education and entertainment” “My second home. Clean, comfortable, friendly helpful staff, great books.” “Community meeting place, lectures, story hours, source of books most important” “Meeting place, resource computer access” “Quiet place to get away” “I grew up going to the library with my mom and wanted to pass on the tradition to my daughter” “It’s a great place it brings me back to what makes me feel good about myself” Some of the responses were positively lyrical –“It nurtures my mind and spirit.” “The library is essential to me – to my quality of life- my sanctuary since I was old enough to get to the library by myself.” “I love to read, the library is beautiful, staff is extraordinarily helpful and I love the whole experience.” “It provides many hours of learning enjoyment through the materials and services it houses.” “We love to read and couldn’t afford to buy all the books we devour nor do we have space to store them. We also come in regularly to find information for school work and to help us with life, from recipes to parenting advice! Thank you- we appreciate so much having experts to help us.”

“How can the Library improve our services to you?” There were many responses indicating “doing a great job”. There were also areas that were identified for improved service: Additional hours were the most requested; improved eBook selection and more user friendly; more programs for adults; additional materials; not charge a hold fee for materials (Done! as of July 1;) New shelving with easier access to materials.

Corte Madera held their annual volunteer appreciation party on April 19, a brunch. All staff participated in providing food, flowers, table settings, set-up. Each attending volunteer received a long-stemmed rose as our appreciation gift.

GOAL 3: RETHINK OUR SPACES FOR BETTER COMMUNITY USE

Our capital projects for accessibility and functionality are moving along nicely and right on schedule. Group 4 Architects presented our preferred concepts at the April Library Commission meeting and at the All Staff Day meeting. Staff is be going out and doing presentations at individual branches and for Friends groups and the Civic Center Conservancy. By end of May display boards should be posted in all of the affected branches (Novato, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Civic Center and Marin City) and a public survey should be available. Addition of an accessible door to the atrium in Novato and

the courtyard construction will begin in early May. A contractor has been selected for the Fairfax bathroom project and will also begin in early May.

I accompanied a small group of staff to San Jose Public Library to visit some of their branches and see their service model in action. SJPL has converted all of their branches to the model we are planning – small service desks, lots of self-checkout, staff out on the floor “roving” and assisting patrons at their point of need. Later in the month our newly formed Steering Committee (see below, PERSONNEL) will be returning to two of the branches for a tour and a more intensive question and answer opportunity. A lunch has been arranged with the San Jose branch staff so our folks will be able to talk to the people actually doing the work and find out the nitty gritty of how the change was managed and how it is working.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved our new Fines and Fees schedule, incorporating among many changes the elimination of the \$.50 hold fee and making adult and juvenile fines \$.25 per day. (Changes will begin on July 1, 2012.) This was a complicated project, involving staff at all levels of the library with support from our County Counsel and the County Administrators Office. The full text <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/efiles/BS/AgMn/agdocs/120403/120403-11-LB-res-RES.pdf>

GOAL 5: FOCUS ON SERVICES TO YOUTH

Fairfax Branch had what will become the first of many Pajama-Rama story times. They had about 30 people, many wearing pajamas and bringing teddy bears, to listen to songs and stories. A parent asked “are you going to do this every week?” Based on its popularity, they are scheduling one for May, and then will start monthly in September

West Marin had a wonderful El día de los niños/El día de los libros program at Point Reyes Library with children’s musician Mariela Herrera on Monday, April 23. First, they took their show on the road up to West Marin School where 80 children from Inverness School, Papermill Children’s Corner preschool, and West Marin School had a sing-a-long with Mariela. Then in the evening, another 44 people shared a light supper, music, book give-away, and piñata, thanks to the Conde/Farley family. TBLA funded this always-successful program.

PERSONNEL:

Library Branch Managers and other management staff gathered together in a mini-retreat to talk about keeping our library goals and vision front and center as we begin to make our remodeling and staffing changes. Each of us completed a brief assessment tool that helped us understand our individual strengths during ordinary times and how those strengths can be called on during times of stress.

We talked at some length about thinking as a team and how our individual strengths bring complementary abilities to the group. We plan to gather together regularly to continue to refine our change management skills.

The Board of Supervisors has approved a revised classification for Library Assistant II and we are hoping to begin the hiring process as soon as possible. The LAII's will be trained in both basic circulation and basic reference and are intended to enrich and supplement the public service provided by our librarians and other public service staff. A pilot program is planned for the Novato Library under the direction of Liz Paris, our Human Resources Specialist. A broad-based committee of representatives from different staffing classifications and different library branches (AKA the Steering Committee) will work with Liz and the Novato branch staff to implement the Single Point of Service model. They'll be looking at other library models, talking about using technology to free staff up to help patrons, and in general trying to make the library work best for the patron. Their watchwords are efficiency, flexibility, and continued excellent public service.

ALL STAFF DAY:

On Friday April 13th we held our annual All Staff Meeting at the Pickleweed Community Center in San Rafael. This is a chance for staff to update their colleagues on what's new and happening (Summer Reading, e-Services, Collection Development); for me to talk about the State of the Library; for Group 4 to update us all on the remodel plans; and for our far-flung staff to get a chance to visit with folks who might be only a signature on an e-mail the rest of the year. Many years ago we had a group photograph taken and this year decided it was time to update it. Art Rogers, well-known West Marin photographer and a big library supporter, came and managed to herd us into a semblance of order and quiet for long enough to take our picture. We're hoping to see the finished product in a month or so. I'm especially proud of how lunch was organized this year. Thanks to the inspiration and hard work of Jennifer Livingston (CLS, Point Reyes,) our goal was to align with the goals of County of Marin to comply with the Zero Waste Challenge by 2025 and their mission of slashing the amount of trash headed for the landfill to zero. Madeline Hope, County of Marin's Waste Education Coordinator in West Marin, coordinated with Jennifer to provide reusable plates and utensils for the lunch. We diverted 100 paper plates and 100 plastic forks and knives were diverted from the landfill. Staff was also encouraged to bring their own cups or water bottles to use throughout the day. The Library will continue to promote the County's over-arching goal stated in the resolution "of each generation leaving less of an ecological footprint on the earth."

MEDIA MENTIONS:

In April, the Marin IJ published 33 Brief/In your Town/Calendar mentions with an additional 22 small articles in other publications. The Point Reyes Light and the West Marin Citizen had 24 brief mentions. Two small articles ran in the IJ and the Newspointer and the IJ ran a long piece on the Fines and Fees Resolution.