

## Director of County Library Services Report For October 2012

### GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING

What Gail is reading: *The Cat's Table* by Michael Ondaatje; *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn; *Crossroads of Twilight* by Robert Jordan.

West Marin library staff has been having such a good time with children and parents in West Marin in October. On October 17, Bonny White (Senior Librarian) and Jennifer Livingston (CLS, Point Reyes) served tea, coffee, crackers and cheese, cookies and juice to more than 20 homeschooling parents and children at the Point Reyes Library. The question of the day was, "How can we serve you better?"

They offered to order books they needed, request books for special assignments, and host class visits (they found out that one group already visits the Inverness Library every week!) They learned that for the homeschooling families, public libraries are a vitally important resource.

One little boy liked the summer reading game so much that he created a fall reading game for himself! They created an email distribution list for their families and promised to let them know whenever there was a library program for children, and had immediate success: Three homeschoolers showed up for the science program we offered at West Marin School the next week.

Then on October 23, nearly 50 people crowded into the Stinson Beach Library to hear 5th graders from Bolinas School read chapters from *The Necromancer's Key*, a book they wrote last year when they were 4th graders.

When our cataloger learned about this planned event, she immediately cataloged a copy of the book which has been checked out ever since. These fifth graders, most of whom Stinson Beach CLS Kerry Livingston has known since they were babies, proudly read their own chapters to the assembled crowd and then celebrated afterwards with cookies and sparkling apple juice. Just think, some people wait a lifetime to see their books on library shelves, but these kids can cross that dream off their bucket lists already!

A great “reading” anecdote from the Civic Center Branch. “Last week, I put out a book on the “Staff Picks” shelf that we just read in my book group called “Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter,” by Tom Franklin. Today, as I approached the circ area, I noticed that book was on the return counter and I checked it in. I saw the patron’s name and asked if she was around. She was and I asked what she thought about the book. She *loved* it and we got into a great discussion about the book. She said she wanted to find other titles by that author. I showed her how to search by author and title. We found one title through Link+, so I got to tell her about Link+. We found the second title on the shelf in Sausalito, so she ordered the book for herself. It was a was one of those moments when you ask, what are the chances of me being around exactly when *that* book is returned???

The Library is a wonderful and mysterious place. (Full moon/Halloween influences lurking???)”

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

Marin County Free Library celebrated science in October! This was the first year that we participated in the Bay Area Science Festival, hosting events at all our branches for wannabe scientists young and old. The Buck Center created a special website for the Festival and all of our events were publicized there and we got excellent coverage from all of our local media. Don’t fret if you missed any of these great programs, we’re planning to participate again next year: Adventures in Whale Anatomy for Teens - Corte Madera, Point Reyes, and Fairfax; Amazing Science - Corte Madera; Conservation Science in Your Backyard - Stinson Beach; Forks Over Knives: A Film Screening and Discussion - Fairfax and Novato; Science Experiments at Preschool Story time - Corte Madera; Science Month Trivia Cafe - Corte Madera and Civic Center; Science Stories: Magnets! – Novato; Science Stories: Plants! – Novato; Science Stories: Sound! – Novato; Spooky Science at Preschool Story time - Corte Madera; Teen Science: Build an Ecobot – Novato; what’s the Scoop on Soil? - Corte Madera; Wonderful Whales for Kids - Marin City

October was *Friends of the Library Month* and several of the Friends Groups made a special effort to reach out to our patrons. In Novato, Mickey and Minnie Mouse came as part of FOL week and had such a good time that they came back for Halloween. Fairfax Branch Manager Margaret Miles attended the town’s Chamber of Commerce meeting where they were having a discussion about promoting businesses during the holiday season. In the past they’ve hired a horse and carriage, but it bypasses all the businesses. Margaret told them that in Quincy (her previous job was as County Librarian for Plumas) they have “Sparkle,” where all the businesses put lights on their storefronts, and have an open house night with apple cider or crackers and cheese. They liked the idea and are moving forward with it! Fairfax Science Month programs have been a huge hit: we packed the room for Xtreme Science Magic Oct. 3, and “sold out” our teen program from the Marine Mammal Center. The featured artist this month is Wendy Hannum, and her show of photographs called “Winter Wildlife, A Study in White” has drawn numerous people into the meeting room to view her stunning photos. Marcia Steiger carved a pumpkin that said “Read,” took its photo, and we posted it to the Library’s Facebook page. We got 10 “likes,” 5 comments, and 12 shares, which is the closest we’ve come to going viral

MCFL is a regular exhibitor at the County's Senior Fair at the Exhibit Hall. This year's theme was "Flights of Fancy" – perfect for a library. The booth was decorated with kites in our brand colors (cute). Last year staff spent a lot of time explaining "those reader things" to befuddled seniors. This year the questions were short and to the point – should I get a Kindle or a Kindle Fire? A Nook or an iPad? Which have better brightness? Can I download books from the library? Our seniors are now e hip.

We had lots of good press coverage in October. The Marin IJ published 53 Brief/In Your Town/Calendar mentions. There were also 23 mentions in the West Marin Citizen and the Point Reyes Light. And three major articles also appeared – multi-page coverage in both the Marin IJ and the San Francisco Chronicle celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Civic Center Library in the Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center. And speaking of media, make sure to "like us" on Facebook.

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

Lots of progress this month! Members of the Novato staff along with Branch Managers from the other libraries attended a Furniture Workshop to select the fabric, finishes and furniture for the remodel project. They also picked a general direction on the look of the interior signs. Currently final plans are refining the lighting, electrical, data and phone needs. The project is scheduled to receive final plans and prepare for bidding early in November. After the furniture is purchased, a delivery date will be established. The delivery will be one of the primary drivers of when the remodel will be scheduled and right now we are looking at something in the February - April range at this point for completion. Plans are also underway to purchase a new front door and shades for part of the atrium.

Discussions are underway to consider moving the Tec Services, Tec Support, and MARINet (all currently in Hangar 6 at Hamilton) and the MCFL Bookmobile offices and vehicle (currently at Civic Center) to Marin Commons (The County purchased the building at 1600 Los Gamos Drive in San Rafael for safety building and is opening to other tenants). The Technical Services and MARINet leases are up at Hamilton in 2014 and we are doing a critical scan of other possible locations that might be less expensive. Moving the Bookmobile from current location at the Civic Center would provide additional room for CCE renovation plans in addition to having operations closer to the vehicle. We are still in the very early exploratory phase and no decisions have been made.

One key component of the remodels is to relocate all back office tasks from the public desk. Last week consultant Lori Bowen Ayers visited Civic Center, Corte Madera and Fairfax to look at current conditions for check-in and will be making recommendations for the design of the new check in rooms. Preliminary diagrams of the workrooms are anticipated in early to mid November. For Civic Center the plan will be to have the check in room where the staff room is shown on the latest diagram. The staff room will be proposed to move to the existing Bookmobile and CCE office space. Structural engineers will be going to Fairfax in the next few weeks to determine the cost and

feasibility of removing a wall. The circulation room design is tentatively planned to be in the area with the wall removed between the existing staff break room and the work room shelves. For Corte Madera there will be an analysis on increasing the size of the circulation room based on costs and functionality.

Last, but certainly not least there are updates proceeding in West Marin. For Point Reyes we have received some initial cost estimates and are still negotiating with the landlord on final costs before going through permitting process. Inverness continues exterior work for accessible upgrades and the interior work is planned to begin in the next month or two.

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

A number of personnel changes became effective this month. Miguel Sanchez was promoted to Library Assistant II in Novato; Shane Ebert was promoted to Library Assistant II in Corte Madera; Mildred Arencibia was hired as Librarian I/Cataloger Technical Services. In addition, we filled 6 vacant part time Library Branch Aide positions in Corte Madera, Fairfax, Novato and Corte Madera. Welcome to our new employees and congratulations to our promotions!

Many of our staff participated in a very well received “Mental Model Busting for Librarians and Library Assistants” workshop. The presenter sums up the program as “With all the changes in the library world, innovative, out of the box thinking is required. When we have a mental model of something, it shapes our behavior and limits our perception of options. Through conversation, activities and consideration of some “dangerous” questions, we will first uncover the mental models that limit staff’s ability to move forward and then explore what could happen if we weren’t constrained by those mental models. Shifting your mental model can result in generating simple changes in the way you serve existing customers or it may open up a new world of possibilities for new ways to serve your entire community.”

Our Fall All Staff Day (really All Staff Morning) was a chance for everyone to get to chat in person with people they often only interact with by phone or e-mail; eat yummy treats that included Vegan donuts; and meet our new hires. The program was varied – a “state of the library” report from the Director; a video clip from our new “Marin Poets Live!” TV show; a presentation from a children’s librarian on “Making Social Media Worth It”; an overview of the new staff Intranet (more on that in my next report); an update from our Communications team; updates on the remodeling; a panel on the Novato Single Point of Service pilot followed by Q & A; and a presentation by the “Rethinking Reference” project.

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

Victoria Gonzalez (CLS, Outreach) and Carla Avitabile (L1, NOV/Teen) continue to visit Juvenile Hall on a regular basis. The kids thrive on the visits - all of them asking for authors and reading, reading.