

## Director of County Library Services Report For January 2013

### GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING

What Gail is reading: *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers* by Anne Lamott; *A Memory of Light: Wheel of Time* by Robert Jordan, et al; *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt.

*In the Heart of the Sea: the Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* was the West Marin Men's Reading group choice for January. Bonny White came into the library just in time to hear one of Dan Carr's book club members raving about this selection. This large book group is really enjoying reading and discussing books like this, the events of which are thought to have inspired Melville's *Moby Dick*.

In Marin City, a teenager's mother paid her daughter's fine in spite of a note the girl had left in her overdue book: "I am a poor student who forgot to return the book and found it when I was cleaning my room. I am begging that you pardon me . . ." The mother indicated that her daughter might not be entirely off the hook, however.

Chinese New Year is coming! There was excitement at the little one room schools. We read stories about Chinese New Year's and a boy performing his first Lion Dance in Chinatown. The excitement escalated as the kids saw the number of costumes and firecrackers involved in the celebration. With the help of some library colleagues Terry Jones (CLS, Bookmobile) found red envelopes with beautiful gold koi on them and filled them with lucky candies and "read" temporary tattoos. My compatriots translated the Chinese characters on the envelopes as "abundance for the New Year". None of the kids knew what abundance was exactly----so we discussed that it could be money but it might also be an abundance of books available to you in the library every week. Their teacher said it might also mean an abundance of homework.....which got some groans! All in all, they decided that the abundance of money for the New Year was the best choice after all but the books were great and the homework would be ok!

The Bookmobile visited The Redwoods in Mill Valley for the first time since December since the facility was closed due to an outbreak of the norovirus. The lineup was a mob scene as patrons finally received their long awaited book requests. Everyone was so happy to see the Bookmobile again and expressed the fact that they had missed it so very much. We even successfully competed with a cookie party put on by the residents to thank the Redwoods' staff for all their extra work during the quarantine. I think this was a definite case of absence making the heart grow fonder.....and a reinforcement of how important library materials are to the seniors we serve.

One Book One Marin 2013 selection *Packing for Mars* had a successful launch at Book Passage. In addition to author Mary Roach, Apollo astronaut Rusty Schweickart (formerly of Tiburon) was a surprise guest. The audience was treated to a witty, engaging conversation between the two about writing and space travel. Shereen Ash (Librarian 1, Fairfax) has worked with the branches to schedule lots of fascinating programs around the topic of space – check out our website or the One Book website for details. Many of us were surprised to learn that there is a Space Museum in Marin! Housing artifacts like pieces of space capsules and astronaut gear, the collection is also strong in Soviet space memorabilia. The museum is in donated space at Pacheco Plaza in Novato and will be the site of one of the Novato Library's programs this spring.

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

Novato has begun a series of craft programs for adults with resounding success. The Henna Tattoos were a sold out show with the attendees "ecstatic" according to staff. Next comes "Beading for Adults."

The Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is going to have the Pacific Sun print an "Only in Fairfax" guide, featuring local businesses, events, etc. At a Chamber mixer, Fairfax Branch Manager Margaret Miles talked to the Pacific Sun representative, met several Town Council members, and arranged to meet the new Town Manager. In a conversation with the Chamber president, Margaret said she wanted to make sure library information was included in the guide and offered to help him with any other areas such as local history. When he got up to introduce key members of the community who were present, he included her, branch manager of "Fairfax Library, probably the most valuable resource we have in our community." This really is a result of attending a number of COC meetings (which are held in the library), and working with them to create programs, as they did last year. Networking pays off!

On a recent Saturday, the Point Reyes Library hosted a College Scholarship Workshop, co-sponsored by 10,000 Degrees of San Rafael. On hand to facilitate, along with Jennifer Livingston (CLS, Point Reyes), was TBLA Board Member and 10,000 Degrees employee, Ariana Aparicio. Sixteen parents, mentors, and leaders attended. People said that they appreciated this informative and helpful event.

The Bolinas Library was the home of our second annual Singer/Songwriter event on January 29. Twenty people attended this year, a real mix of younger and older

songwriter/musicians, all of whom seemed to enjoy the performances. Attendees first explained their creative process and what led them to write their songs and then performed their music for the audience. Many people who intended just to drop off materials in the book drop ended up staying for the whole event. This kind of homegrown programming is always very successful in Bolinas.

Corte Madera had a full house for their docent program, "The Girl with the Pearl Earring" on Jan. 30. They got a piece of amusing, unintended publicity in Leah Garchik's column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on January 30th when she reported: "Lani Zinn used her iPhone voice recognition to place on her calendar a talk at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Corte Madera Library about "Girl With a Pearl Earring." When she looked at the device, it referred to the subject as "Girl with the Parole Hearing." There was a good turnout of 18 for the "SAT/ACT Prep for Parents" and a series of origami workshops for children, led by two very talented local teenagers were well attended. Local young ballerina Sierra Glasheen, age 8, appeared at a story time, demonstrating her art and talking about her role in *Firebird* with the Marin Dance Theater.

There were had lots of articles about the Library this month. The Marin IJ published 15 Brief/In Your Town/Calendar mentions. There were also 39 mentions in the West Marin Citizen and the Point Reyes Light. 8 full articles appeared in the Patch, the Pacific Sun, the Ross Valley Reporter, the Marin IJ, Santa Cruz Sentinel, the San Jose Mercury News and Frankly Speaking, the County's in house newsletter. A full page ad in the Marin IJ listed all of the programs and sponsors for One Book One Marin. And speaking of media, make sure to "like us" on Facebook and ask your friends to "like us" also. Staff posts all sorts of interesting tidbits there so it's an easy way to keep in touch with the library.

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

On February 5<sup>th</sup> the Board of Supervisors approved the closing of the Novato Library on March 7<sup>th</sup> with the reopening scheduled for April 1. During that time we'll be installing a new single point of service desk and some addition self-checkout machines, improving the lighting and the phone and electrical systems, reworking the entire front area with low shelving for new and popular collections, and adding lots of comfortable seating. While the branch is temporarily closed, we'll be adding hours to the South Novato branch and rescheduling many of the programs there. Books can be returned anywhere else in the system and we will be extending the checkout dates of most materials so they will be due after reopening. We'll do a major publicity blitz in the media and with signs at the library. The Library website has a graphic of what work is being done and it and our calendar will be updated frequently. And we'll be posting progress pictures on our website and on Facebook. This is the first of the closings so we're keeping close track of what is working well and what isn't – I'm sure we'll have the chance to learn from our experience as we move on to Fairfax, Corte Madera and the Civic Center!

Building projects are in full swing at the Inverness and Point Reyes Libraries. Inverness Library is enjoying a newly renovated bathroom and kitchen. The remainder of the interior work, realigning the shelving and remodeling the circulation desk, is planned to be finished by the end of March. The Point Reyes meeting room is nearly ready for sheet rock - the next step in the process - and Ana Maria Ramirez of West Marin Literacy Services is busily packing up materials in anticipation of the move to the new space, tentatively scheduled for mid-March.

We just received budget and proposed schematic designs for Fairfax, Corte Madera and Civic Center so those branches are moving along also!

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

Several staff members traveled to Seattle for the American Library Association Midwinter Conference. The entire group wore badges that said "Wanna be my new Director? Ask me how!" to help recruit for MCFL's new library director! Bonny White (Senior Librarian, West Marin) spoke at the Innovative Users Group on the topic of Sierra Implementation. Donna Mettier (Library Services Manager, Technical Services) spoke at an invitation only breakfast for users of Collection HQ, the software we use to track materials usage. Margaret Miles (Senior Librarian, Fairfax) and Janet Doerge (Senior Librarian, Novato) attended several presentations about how to reach out to their communities in meaningful ways. Carla Avitabile (Librarian 1, Teen at Novato) participated in a panel discussion about the "Maker" camp that Novato teens participated in last summer. She was recognized in *American Libraries*, the library professional journal, which said "*The "MAKE Magazine Introduces Maker Camp 2013" session introduced librarians to the free Maker Camp held on Google+. [Maker Camp](#) uses Google+ Hangouts to broadcast live maker workshops to participants around the world, and a number of libraries took part in the inaugural Maker Camp 2012. Librarians Amber Creger, Carla Avitabile (sic), and Erin Downey Howerton spoke on the panel about their successful participation last year, and enthused about the return of Maker Camp this summer, from July 8 to August 16.*"

We had a half-day All Staff gathering that focused on the Novato Single Point of Service development and the Communication Audit Implementation Team (CAIT, for short.) There were lots of questions asked and answered. Thanks to the Blue Skies Café (sponsored by Buckelew Programs and staffed by their clients who are Marin residents dealing with mental illness) everyone enjoyed coffee and yummy breakfast treats.

A number of recruitments are currently underway as we begin to fill the many vacancies in the branches. We'll be filling 2 LA2 openings at Marin City, one full and one part-time; 3 half-time vacancies at the Civic Center; and three half-time vacancies at Novato, one of which is for Spanish Language Services. 17 people applied for the Spanish Language Services position, of which 7 met minimum qualifications. Over 100 people applied for the other 7 positions with 32 meeting minimum qualifications. 14 people were passed along to the selection panel. Interviews for all of these positions will be in mid-February.

Upcoming recruitments include 2 Library Technical Assistant IIs at Technical Services, an Accounting position; and a Librarian 1 for Youth Services at Corte Madera and Marin City.

The recruitment for a new Director of County Library Services is moving along well. Applications closed on February 4<sup>th</sup> and there were 27 applicants who met minimum qualifications. Next the recruiters will identify the top 8–10 candidates who will be invited to an oral board and a staff meet and greet in early March. The oral board will consist of some local librarians, some Bay area librarians, representatives of the community (Friends, Foundation, Commission) and some County department heads. The staff panel will be a cross slice of our employees who have expressed interested – some line staff, some managers. The County Administrator will interview the top three or four candidates and then they'll be interviewed by the Board of Supervisors for a final decision.

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

Jennifer Robinson (Librarian 2, Novato Children's) is participating in the California State Library's Eureka Leadership program this year. Part of the curriculum is to complete a project, funded by the State Library that shows initiative and innovation. Jennifer has chosen as her project to "Provide better patron/child self-help access to the Picture Book collection by sorting the books into broad subject areas (like Trucks, Animals) rather than arranged by author." To determine the subject areas that will be used, Jennifer will work with the parents and kids from a pre-school in the area who will sort the books into the areas they think they should be in. This project not only serves the children in the library but also makes the community an active participant and we are all really excited about the possibilities. The full description she sent to her advisor is: Beginning in March, staff and library school interns will be re-organizing portions of the Children's collection at the South Novato and Novato branches in cooperation with local patrons. Currently the picture books (one of the most popular collections) are arranged by the author's last name, making it very difficult for a small child or parent to locate a book about trucks, dinosaurs, colors, or other topics that interest them. To remedy this, categories of interests will be identified by parents and children at a local cooperative preschool, and patrons will have opportunities to advise staff on which types of books they think belong in which category via public events that encourage participation in sorting the materials. The books will then be given special colored category stickers and arranged on the shelves so that more of the highly attractive book covers are visible and the groupings of topics will be easy to discern. For our not-yet-reading and ESL patrons, we'll be designing iconography that will help identify the topics. This is a new way of thinking about our collection and it's going to be an exercise in adaptation as well as a great outreach opportunity. Re-engineering our jumbled and crowded picture book shelves into easy to use, self-serve reading destinations will improve access to materials, empowering patrons to find books based on their interests in a way that makes sense to them, and therefore increasing their sense of ownership of the library. This project is part of the [Eureka Leadership Program](#), supported by the California State

Library and funds from the federal [Library Services and Technology Act \(LSTA\)](#) program.

## **MORE INTERESTING STUFF**

From Jessica Door in the Huffington Post 2/1/13: "*Libraries in the Digital Age* from the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life project had some penetrating insights into the library world today. Pew found that 91 percent of Americans (16 or older) say that public libraries are important to their communities, and 76 percent say libraries are important to them and their families. I can't think of another idea, place, or issue that 91 percent of Americans support. I also think this puts to rest once and for all the notion that public libraries are not needed in a world where information is available predominately online and in electronic formats. Americans continue to see the value of libraries and this report shows that Americans now believe the availability of computers and Internet services is as fundamental to libraries as books and reference help. But this does not mean that it is easy for libraries to meet the demands of their communities in our increasingly digital information environment. Library users have new expectations and needs: around a third of Americans say they would be very likely to use services like online reference chats with librarians, programs that allowed them to try new digital devices and learn new digital skills, and app-based access to library materials and services."