

**Director of County Library Services Report
For
March, 2010**

BRANCH NEWS –

Civic Center: A month-long display of over 20 handmade ship models by Gordon Walker, a former Marin resident, augmented by books from the branch's collection on ships, sailing, and boating has been a big attraction in the branch. Linda Aldrich (LI), worked with Mr. Walker to set up the display which caught the attention of *Marin Independent Journal* writer, Paul Liberatore, who published a story about the model ships at the Civic Center Library. As a result of the resulting publicity, the ships will be on display for an extended period of time.

On the afternoon of Fri, Mar 12, the branch lost internet connectivity, but that didn't keep the Reference Team members from providing great service. Using a staff member's smart phone, they were able to continue assisting patrons in finding information including the author of *Piano Teacher* which was found on our shelves for the patron to check out and the meaning of the Latin term, Sanctus. Results of web searching on the phone included an entry from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. When it became clear that the patron was very interested in the article as she read it on the screen of the mobile device, staff provided a print copy from the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* from our reference collection. Kudos to the team for coming up with an innovative technical solution to an unfortunate technical problem.

Novato/Civic Center: A patron from Tracy, CA visited Marin County twice in pursuit of an item she needed. She found it finally in the Novato Advance microfilm at the Novato Branch but was unable to get a satisfactory print. Helen Romero (LII) contacted Civic Center's Elmer Jan (LII,) for an alternate solution. After talking to the patron, Elmer worked through the problem using CCE's digital scanner and was able to e-mail 4 clear images to her. She replied gratefully, appreciative both of the quality of the copies and of the fact that she didn't need to drive to Marin a third time. Teamwork by the Heads of Reference at two branches resulted in the provision of excellent customer service.

Corte Madera: Marilyn Wronsky was honored as the “Humane Educator of the Year” by the Marin Humane Society. This honor was bestowed because of her work with the Read-to-a-Dog program. Marilyn was honored at a “spring social” at the Humane Society on March 21. The library continues to offer read-to-a-dog sessions on the first Saturdays of the month.

Corte Madera honored all of their volunteers at their annual Volunteer Tea on March 17. Since the day was also St. Patrick’s Day, they adopted the theme “We’re Lucky to Have You.” The meeting room was festive with bright green and yellow table settings and colorful flower arrangements. Cookies, small sandwiches, fruit, and a chocolate cake were served along with several varieties of tea. The volunteers were presented with appreciation gifts of MCFL travel mugs and candles. All members of the staff pitched in to make this event a success.

Fairfax: Gail Wiemann (Sr. Librarian) accompanied Marcia Hagen (Library Foundation) and Judy Anderson (Library Commission) to the March Fairfax Chamber of Commerce meeting to present information about the library’s budget situation. After an extensive question and answer period, the Chamber voted to endorse the Measure A.

West Marin: Daniel Will-Harris was featured on the front page of the County’s Volunteer View in March. Will-Harris teaches Inverness’ popular Bring Your Own Laptop classes and also provides individualized computer instruction at the Point Reyes Library.

TEENS: Teen Services received \$1000 from the Margaret A. Edwards Trust for their Juvenile Hall project. They had submitted the grant proposal nearly a year ago and had given up hope!

SENIOR SERVICES: More than 30% of the population in Marin County today is over 65 years old. By 2035 that number is expected to triple, the number of people 80 years or older will also just about triple, increasing 2.7 times, and one out of every 3 people will be over 55. (For more details go to www.abag.ca.gov/rss/pdfs/whatif.pdf, p. 10) Clearly our senior programs will take on more and more importance in our planning. Thanks to Victoria Gonzales (CLS, Outreach) we now have a wonderful flyer to explain the range of services currently available. Branch Resources include helpful branch staff; free DVD’s and audio books; large print books and Russian and Spanish collections; computer classes and computer time; author talks and lectures of various topics of interest; volunteer opportunities. The Bookmobile takes services out into the community and their service with a smile extends to helping pick out just the right book or movie or large print books from their excellent selection. Using a corps of trained volunteers, Library Beyond Walls takes the next step and brings our books and movies right to the home of folks who are unable to visit their local branch or the bookmobile, whether permanently or temporarily due to illness or disability. In addition to creating the information flyer, Victoria has also visited with all of the senior facilities in our branch areas and spoke this month at the Marin chapter of Senior Program Directors.

PUBLICITY: We had 67 mentions in Marin newspapers this month. 6 were about parcel taxes and were quite positive; 4 were about One Book One Marin; 5 were feature article; and the rest were calendar mentions or very brief items.

DISCOVERY CATALOG: If you haven't tried out our Discovery tool, you're missing out on one of the best improvements MARINet has ever made to our catalog. From the Library's webpage (www.marinlibrary.org) click on the blue and yellow "Try the new Discovery Catalog" button. And what will you discover? *It's fast. It's powerful.* If you are a library nerd and into things like limiting and integrated results, this is for you. *It's convenient. It's interactive.* If you simply want to find something quickly and easily, this is for you. One box searching – just like Google. Clean, clear design. Quick access to book reviews. Share your booklists with librarians or other library patrons. Use RSS feeds to get information automatically. And my favorite - *Use the word cloud to bring serendipity back to searching.*

PERSONNEL: We had one staff person retire under the VSIP (early separation) program) and they needed to be retired as of March 31st. For next year, that position will be eliminated from the budget and we will be finding alternative ways of covering the public service hours. If our ballot measure does not pass in June, we will be able to offer a second round of VSIP to staff in whatever classes are affected by the planned cuts.

PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE: Although we have cut back on our Conference and Training budget, we did set some aside funds this year for attendance at the bi-annual PLA conference held this year in Portland, Oregon. Unlike our large American Library Association conference, this one is particularly geared to the needs of public libraries of all sizes (not medical or legal or university folks.) Donna Mettier (Acting Supervisor of Technical Services,) Scott Bauer (Deputy Director) and I attended the week of March 22nd. By pre-planning and splitting up we managed to see a wide variety of programs on topics as diverse as library reorganization, collecting and using data effectively, managing shared collections, tips for teen librarians and more. We also spent time in the large exhibit area, talking to current vendors and making the acquaintance of new ones. All of us took copious notes that we shared with colleagues at home. This conference is always an excellent mix of the pragmatic and the inspirational and this year was no exception. Unlike previous years, however, there was a pervasive undertone of unease around the nationwide economic problems. It is not unusual for libraries in a particular geographic area of the country to be having money issues while colleagues in another area are thriving, but this is the first time in my many years of attending that everyone I heard in a program or talked to informally was facing serious budget cuts.

MEASURE A/ BUDGET: On March 29th I went before the Board of Supervisors to present our budget for Fiscal 2010/11. (Slides soon to be available at marinlibrary.org) Because I had updated them fairly recently, this time I kept my presentation quite short. County Administrator Matthew Hymel introduced me by pointing out that many of the County's departments had no means of increasing revenue, but the Library is one of the few that do. I went over the 12% reductions we've made over the last two years while stressing the concurrent growth in business; laid out the terms of Measure A; showed how we would spend the money if the measure passes (75% to maintain open hours, restore the book budget and retain essential services and programming and 25% on critical maintenance and mandated accessibility improvements;) showed them a graph of the gap between our "sources" and our "uses;" and reiterated the measures we would have to take if the measure does not pass (close Civic Center on Saturday, close Sunday hours, close some mornings and afternoons, plus an additional \$1 million.) There were no questions as they all were quite familiar with the material but Board President Judy Arnold thanked me for coming and keeping them up-to-date.

We were all extremely pleased when the Elections Dept. let us know that there was no argument filed against Measure A. This gives us a little more flexibility in terms of referring folks to the New Chapter website for more information and hopefully is a barometer of community support for the library.