

**Director of County Library Services Report
For
February 2012**

GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING

When we began using Collection HQ to help us manage our collection, we anticipated it would take some time for the program's data base to collect enough information to begin to see trends and aberrations in the circulation of our collection. The Collection Development Team has worked closely with the circulation staff to do a lot of database cleanup and to make sure that all the bits and pieces were in place to allow accurate data retrieval and smooth sharing of the materials among the branches. Happily, we are beginning to see excellent results even before the end of a full year. Running frequent "grubby" lists has allowed us to find high circulating materials that are worn and unattractive and replace them with fresh copies. Sometimes these are purchased replacements but other times they are duplicate copies in good shape that are sitting on a shelf in another branch. Reports on "shelf sitters" let us move books that might have worn out their welcome in one location on to another, where they will be "new" and therefore more likely to be checked out. To ensure that our new books remain high circulating, we are running reports that let a branch call in any new book that has been sitting at another branch for more than 10 days. The test report showed only 4 titles in that category which was really good news.

E-books continue to be heavily requested and the relationship between libraries and publishers seems to change daily. Our Overdrive collection is jointly owned by all of the libraries in the MARINet consortium and that is working well. The MARINet Board did have to make a hard decision this month and deny access to the Overdrive collection to out of County users. By contract, we are limited to serving just our MARINet patrons and unfortunately we learned that some neighboring libraries were sending patrons to Marin to get a card just so that they could check out our Overdrive materials. Since we remain committed to the State goals of sharing and equal access, the MARINet staff found a way to block those patrons from Overdrive while still ensuring that they can check out other materials if they come to our libraries.

Stinson Beach Library recently received a long, unsolicited email from a happy patron who loves to browse the STB collection of art books and always finds materials that really interest him. A testament to the value of printed as well as electronic books.

GOAL 2: ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

Marin City's 15th birthday ceremony, reception and photo display was on Saturday Feb. 11, 15 years to the day since it opened. I spoke briefly and Supervisor Kathrin Sears made some lovely congratulatory remarks. Time flies – it seems like yesterday that I was speaking at the grand opening and Supervisor Annette Rose was doing the congratulating. There was an extremely moving performance by local youngster Cordell Coleman of the Performing Stars of Marin which re-enacted his great-grandfather's experiences as a black cadet at West Point and his later experiences in the Army. The walls were hung with a photo display by David Johnson, a black photographer trained by Ansel Adams. On February 13 Mr. Johnson was featured in a discussion "Positive Negatives: the Photography of David Johnson." Both the celebration and program were sponsored by Friends of the Marin City Library.

One of the ways we try to reach beyond our physical walls is our AskALibrarian service which allows patrons of member libraries e-mail access to librarians across the State. We don't often get direct feedback from users, but recently a user commented: "An excellent service. Your librarian found genealogical information which I thought might be outside your range of services and I tried you only because I had failed elsewhere. Most impressive service." Thanks D.M. wherever you are!

Reaching out also means engaging with users and our potential users where they are. Fairfax Branch Manager Margaret Miles spoke to the Ross Valley Rotary earlier this month, and was told by the gentleman who introduced her that "I defeated all the stereotypes he had of librarians!" Her topic was "will libraries be extinct in 20 years?" (hint, the answer is no).

We also invite people in to talk about community issues within our physical walls. Fairfax Library held a welcome tea for Supervisor Katie Rice on Feb. 4 and had about 25 people in attendance. She answered questions from attendees and discussed schools, sanitation and other issues of interest to those present. The refreshments were stunning!

The Mainstreet Moms of Point Reyes Station approached the library a few weeks ago because they wanted to learn how to use social media. A class was arranged for the Moms with West Marin's computer guru and volunteer teacher, Daniel Will-Harris. What a wonderful example of how libraries can quickly find the resources to meet community needs. Right after the class, one of the Mainstreet Moms wrote a beautiful valentine to the library which was read on KWMR and posted on the Point Reyes library blog.

GOAL 3: RETHINK OUR SPACES FOR BETTER COMMUNITY USE

Civic Center staff has just completed two projects to create a more inviting space for their children and teens. In the Teen area, brightly colored fabric and a distinctive sign have been in place for a little while but there are now area rugs, comfortable chairs to lounge in, fun bright aluminum tables and colorful seating. One patron commented "I like what you've done to the place. It looks like the Jetsons." That's such an appropriate comment for a building that once starred in the futuristic science fiction movie "Gattaca!" In the Children's area, the clunky tables were replaced by lighter weight, wheeled ones that are easy for staff to move for story times and other programs, display racks for board boards, some kid-safe step stools and a new CD browser.

There's a beautiful new path winding through the garden at the Inverness Library. The garden is maintained by the Inverness Garden club. The IGC had plans to install this path for years, but the cost of the flagstone was prohibitive. A neighbor heard about the plan on the West Marin Share email group and immediately donated the stone, left over from a path she built at her house. There's a picture of the new path on the Inverness page of the MCFL website.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Communications is important to every business and at MCFL we have the challenges of 10 different physical locations and scheduling that stretches over 7 days and 11 hour days. The Communications Audit that we did last year emphasized that we needed a convenient way for staff to keep up with current events at the library. So, to help bridge the gulfs of time and space, we have just contracted with ServerLogic (the company that created our new public website) to design a staff-only site. The new site will have system-wide and Branch specific "news" blogs that will be easily accessible both for reading and posting. Our Policy & Procedures Manual will be migrated over, and we are aiming for much improved searchability. (There is nothing more frustrating than knowing a policy exists and not having quick access to it.) Development is on a fast timetable and we are planning to unveil the site at our All Staff meeting in April.

GOAL 5: FOCUS ON SERVICES TO YOUTH

Staff is well into planning for Summer Reading and have some exciting programs and outreach projects planned. Regular weekly programs continue to gain in popularity. A glance at the on-line calendar for February on the website shows not only lapsit, toddler and preschool story times, Mother Goose on the Loose, and bilingual story times. There are morning and afternoon story times and weekend story times. And there are outdoor story times at the Farmers Market and special story times at the supermarket. Fairfax Library had its first-ever Teen Advisory Group meeting, and it was very successful, with 6 teens attending, even though it was ski week. They will be meeting again next month, and discussing programs, volunteer projects and other ideas. They also had 40 (count 'em, forty!) people in the meeting room for Mother Goose on the

Loose and are looking at adding a second program per week of this very popular program.

PERSONNEL:

Certainly the personnel highlight of the month was having Terry Jones (CLS, Bookmobile) honored as County Employee of the Year. In her own words "What a month of surprises! Receiving the honor of Employee of the Year was certainly unexpected but that was just the beginning of the surprises to come. Imagine my face when Margaret Miles (Senior Librarian, Fairfax) came into the Supervisors Chamber and started passing out laminated Terry photos on "picket signs" and cutout faces that my colleagues "wore"! Whatever composure I'd been working on was completely gone thanks to the awesome staff at my home branch, Fairfax! Family, friends and colleagues from other parts of my life were there to cheer the library on. Their enthusiasm put the "rowdy" tag on librarians---according the Marin IJ!"

And even more surprises at the "after party" - amazing decorations done by the kids at Union, Lincoln and Laguna Schools. Panels with fabulous art work and "books" with messages inside. Here are a few of the titles: *Terry Potter and the Country Road*; *Curious George Rides the Library Bus*; *One Bus, Two Bus, Red Bus, Blue Bus*; *Star Wars Jedi Librarians*; *The Berenstain Bears and Too Many Books*. And some of the great comments inside: "Terry reads me stories. I like Terry a lot." "I love how you always try your hardest to find the books I want" "Library is my favorite. Terry makes stories good. I think she should win a prize!" "Dear Miss Terry---you are the best employ I have ever met" "Thank you for the Star Wars books!" "You greet us with your smile every day you come to bring us books" "I'm happy that we have Terry as the library lady" The library is happy we have Terry too!!

MEDIA MENTIONS:

The Novato Soroptimists do a weekly 30 minute broadcast on Novato Public Access TV called "Sounding Board" and this month I spoke about the changing library landscape and Terry Jones spoke about her adventures on the Bookmobile. Both interviews are on-line: mine at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBBxF8kZpa0&context=C3f6e032ADOEgsToPDskIY0SG4SO-a5UQiLxsFdLaM> and Terry's at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qhku07FWo&context=C3f6e032ADOEgsToPDskIY0SG4SO-a5UQiLxsFdLaM>

I was also interviewed on Comcast's "Making a Difference in Marin," covering some of the same subjects and branching out into others. <http://blip.tv/making-a-difference-in-marin/making-a-difference-in-marin-episode-56-5949736>

In February, the Marin IJ published 37 Brief/In Your Town/Calendar mentions with an additional 7 small articles in other publications. There were two nice articles about Terry Jones being Employee of the Year and 2 larger ads for One Book One Marin. There were also 26 brief mentions in the always supportive Point Reyes Light and West Marin Citizen.