

## Director of County Library Services For August 2011

### GOAL 1: CONNECT WITH READING

#### **Dominican University Library is officially part of MARINet.**

The integration went extremely smoothly, with only a few kinks remaining to be worked out. This was a major project for the MARINet office and Deb Moehrke and her folks did an excellent job of working with and educating the Dominican staff, facilitating the work of the of Innovative Interfaces sales and technical folks, and keeping MARINet libraries in the loop as changes occurred. The Dominican collection is about 108,000 items, of which 82 percent are unique to Dominican (that is, there are no other copies in MARINet libraries). Most of the collection is academic non-fiction, but Dominican does have a small collection (about 1,000 items) of “leisure reading” materials that are fiction and mysteries, which they acquired to encourage students to come into the library more often. These leisure materials will not be holdable. They have DVDs in the collection, which are holdable, mostly non-fiction and documentary titles. Like most academic libraries, Dominican University Library shelves their books using Library of Congress call numbers. MARINet’s public libraries, like most public libraries, use Dewey Decimal Classification call numbers on their items. If there are copies of an item at both Dominican and another MARINet location, the different call numbers will display in the catalog on the line for each item. MARINet public libraries often have different call numbers for the same items, so this shouldn’t be too confusing.

**Overdrive Digital Pioneer Award.** MCFL was nominated by the staff at Overdrive, our largest e-book vendor, for the award by OverDrive staff and was chosen as a recipient for “your excellent approach to getting staff involved in the service. You stood out for the great lengths that you went to make sure that everyone was on board. You can tell your staff that you got the award for being awesome.” Congratulations to Amanda Foust, E-Services Librarian, who went above and beyond the call of duty to work with the vendor and with MCFL staff to make our e-book collection accessible to our readers.

**E-books.** In a major step forward to reduce patron confusion, the MARINet Board voted several months ago to fund a shared e-book collection. Unlike print books, e-books are licensed so that patrons only had access to e-books if their home library actually purchased them. Now, all MARINet patrons share a master collection with over 2,420 titles. Belvedere-Tiburon, San Rafael, and MCFL merged their collections, with additional funding added from MARINet.

**Adult Summer Reading.** 445 adults participated this year, up from 133 in 2010! More than 225 adults took part in ten programs across all the branches. There was lots of positive feedback around the theme “Novel Destinations” and the book bags proved a popular incentive to attract signups. Fairfax’s program was a huge hit with 140 sign-ups, attracting more readers than any other branch and their enthusiastic readers posted a grand total of 182 reviews! Librarians reached out to 8 community groups to involve their participants, including Aegis of Corte Madera, the Margaret Todd Center in Novato, the Redwoods in Mill Valley, the Parnow House and Rotary Village in San Rafael, the San Geronimo Senior Group, and the Dillon Beach and Tomales Community Centers.

**Bookmobile:** An amazing summer for reading ----babies to adults! 21 Adults signed up for the online reading program and, for those without computer access, we entered their book reviews for them. Everyone had fun reading and seeing what other folks were reading as well. Some of the reviews were so direct and to the point that some of our folks could write reviews for the New Yorker.

This summer, our outreach to the ranches had 10 stops on Wednesdays. We started out with kids and horses and ended up with more kids and organic dairy cows----with even more kids and animals in between. The ripple effect is working well and we are now reaching whole families on the ranches----moms with young babies and working dads. We have one dedicated young ranch worker in particular who is on the case learning English. Since he works his dairy shift during our stop, we have the “book bag hanging on the door knob” delivery method for his books, movies and English learning materials. Occasionally we have to work around the cows to get TO the door knob, but our herding skills are improving----perhaps not as fast as Mario’s English, however! 15 end of summer reading parties brought lots of smiles and T-shirts together----with brownies, strawberries and cold drinks thrown in. Elisabeth (Spanish Services Librarian) and Terry Jones (CLS Bookmobile) were enough of a hit bringing summer reading to the Old Gallinas Child Development Center that they’ve asked them for a return engagement throughout the school year. They were feeling pretty happy with their bilingual Spanish/English programs---perhaps a bit over confident. A little boy and another little girl in one of the preschool classes weren’t getting the idea of sitting down for the story so others could see. Terry tried to encourage them in English, Elisabeth tried in Spanish and they just weren’t getting the point across. Kindly, one of the teachers rescued them and gave the right body language clues for the kids. “Ah,” he said, “next time try Portuguese---they’re from Brazil!” Maybe next season they can add that to our repertoire!

**Summer Reading Survey.** Our first annual survey yielded some fascinating results. By far the largest group of responders was the teens – 61%, followed by adults at 27% and children at 12%. And the responders were overwhelming female – 83%. 43% said

this was the first time they had participated in the SRP. When asked to describe “your library” comments included from “A peaceful place” “A place to find a random surprise within the pages of the books” and when asked if there were any other comments “I love this program” and “I appreciated that there are reading programs for various age levels – our whole family is involved.”

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

Partnering with the Redwoods, the senior book club, and teen tech help from Marin Catholic, teens will be trained at one of our branches to assist seniors with our website and downloading e-books. After a trial run, the teen advisors may also be deployed at our branches.

If you are planning to attend the San Rafael Business Showcase, Sept 14, 3:30-7:30 at the Embassy Suites, make sure to look for the MCFL booth which will showcase library services that are especially pertinent to the business community.

Planning continues for our **Evening with Kay Ryan** on Friday evening November 18<sup>th</sup>. Jennifer Livingston (CLS Point Reyes) is organizing the event, working closely with staff from Dominican University and Book Passage. Posters went up this month, and tickets will be available starting September 1 at all branches and at Book Passage. Thanks to Gail Grant (Office Asst.III) for designing the beautiful posters and tickets and to the Library Foundation for agreeing to manage the sales proceeds. Poet Laureate Ryan is a Marin County resident and after graciously accepting an invitation to do a program for us, requested that it be a fundraiser to benefit the library! Proceeds from the event will be used to support arts and poetry programming at all branches of MCFL.

West Marin staff continues to host a very popular weekly table at the West Marin Farmer's Market. From all accounts, Farmer's Market staff is thrilled to have us there. When Jennifer Livingston (CLS Point Reyes) staffed the table last week, she reported that when she decided to read stories to one small visitor, she suddenly attracted more children and had a little story time. Kerry Livingston (CLS, Stinson Beach) has done a great job of making sure we always have the right books to go along with the weekly cooking theme.

A weekly coffee klatch in Inverness turned into an informal Ipad class. Several patrons sitting around the table in the Jack Mason Museum wanted to see how Overdrive worked, so staff did a short demo. Then someone who knew about cloud computing shared a tip about Evernote - so everyone learned something.

On August 30 the Fairfax Library hosted a Docent from the De Young Museum who presented a slide show on the current Picasso exhibit; this very popular event was attended by over 30 people.

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

In the very first completed project of the Facilities Stabilization Plan, a door has been installed at the entrance to the Anne T. Kent California History Room within the Civic Center. We've wanted to do this for quite some time in order to provide greater security for valuable items in their collection. A bonus will be some noise and access control when programs are held in the adjacent magazine or children's areas.

Next in line is an ADA project at Novato to make the atrium accessible. The work will probably be done in two chunks – the first will involve creating an accessible path of travel within the atrium itself and the second will require adding an additional door to the atrium that is wide enough for a wheel chair. A landscape architect (Brian Powell & Assoc.) is looking at various solutions that maintain as much of the current look and feel as possible. Since we have been pre-approved "in concept" to use some available redevelopment funds, we are working to complete the work in a tight time frame to be able to get reimbursed by Novato Redevelopment.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) has gone out to area architectural firms for the lobby remodels in Civic Center, Novato, Corte Madera, Fairfax and Marin City. The submittals are due in mid-October and then there will be interviews (if required) late October. Damon Hill, (Library Services Manager) is spearheading all of our capital projects and is working closely with Public Works and MCFL Accounting to get all the i's dotted and the t's crossed. After selecting a firm, the next steps will be working with staff and the community to link this project with the Services & Facilities Vision Plan. The planning process will probably continue through spring, 2012 and we're hoping to begin at least some of the projects in Fiscal Year 2012/13.

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

As part of the transition to the MARINet based Overdrive platform for e-books (see above, Connect with Reading) we've dedicated staff time and resources to training. Diana Spaulding (L1, Extra Hire) worked closely with Amanda Foust (L2, Electronic Services) to plan and execute a comprehensive training program. Each branch has a designated "super user" who is responsible for being the local expert and for supporting other staff in his/her branch. These super users participated in an on-line training with Diana, which will be followed up by hands on training as needed. Overdrive is holding regular on-line classes that the super users will take and they will also participate in a group viewing of a webcast detailing the experience Sacramento Public had developing their plan to circulate Nooks. The goal is that by October we will be ready to roll out training for the public, and that we will be experts by the time the holiday season rolls around and our patrons come in to use their new devices to download our books.

## GOAL 5: FOCUS ON SERVICES TO YOUTH

**AWE (Advanced Workstations in Education, Inc.)** 4 Bilingual Early Literacy Stations (ELS) have recently been installed in the Novato Library Children's Room and there are plans to install 3 additional ones in South Novato this fall. These workstations are self-contained educational tools for children ages 2–10 featuring 56 pre-loaded educational software programs in the Curricular Areas of: Math and Problem Solving; Science & Nature; Social Studies & Geography; Reading, Words & Phonics; Writing & Computer Skills; Reference (featuring The ELF Child-Safe Browser that allows children to safely explore carefully chosen educational resources on the Internet); and Music & Art. Thanks to the Friends of the Novato Libraries who purchased the 4 licenses for Novato!

**Summer Reading Program:** For the first time MCFL is participating in a statewide effort to collect a standardized set of data about our programs. This will provide a baseline in future years to measure our efforts and let us compare ourselves to other libraries in California. Although the final numbers are still being tabulated, we know that more than 3,641 children signed up for the SRP and at least 5,060 came to specific events at the library. Our staff made a special effort to reach out to community groups with programs and involved almost 850 children. Special thanks to the Tomales Bay Library Association (TBLA) for purchasing t-shirts for the Ranch Program!

Why do we do a summer reading program? Highlights from a staff report entitled "West Marin Literacy Summer Reading Program on the Ranches for Children of Limited English Speaking Parents 2011" illustrates the reasons --

*In response to a need for continued academic support to primarily Latino children during summer recess, the West Marin Literacy Program and the Point Reyes Public Library collaborated for the 11th consecutive year to bring an outreach storytelling and book check out program to those children who, because of their parent's work schedule, relative isolation and lack of transportation, often lose ground in their reading skills and find it difficult to participate in school and library events during the summer. The program ... targeted 12 ranches on both the Inverness and Chileno Valley sides of Tomales Bay. The program ran for 5 weeks with ending fiestas held at various ranches. The program ran from July 11<sup>th</sup> until August 9<sup>th</sup> with visits to the ranches every Monday and Tuesday...5 Latino teens, including 3 who have participated in the reading program in previous years were selected to act as assistants, keeping track of which books were checked out. They were also responsible for helping to coordinate the final event and selecting bilingual books to read...The program served 66 children between 1 and 13 years of age. 14 parents participated in the program. Parents were invited but not required to be present as the visits took place during the workday. It was noted, however that those parents who did participate were more likely to encourage their children to read the books loaned, check out books themselves, as well as, take the opportunity to attend the final event, making it more of a family supported program. All parties enjoyed their books and visits from the coordinator, social and student assistants. This was evidenced by the anticipation with which the children awaited each weekly visit and the outcome report tallies at the end of the program. A total of 439 books were checked out by children on the ranches and all but 7 were returned on*

*time... Comments included "Well I had fun and I think you guys should do it every year!"; "They were nice and make me want to read."; "I like it when you come because you give us books so we can read them."*

*This program has shown its effectiveness on many different levels. The families who participate in the Summer Reading Program are more likely to visit their local libraries, developing a confidence and comfort in their ability to select and check out books for themselves and their children. Furthermore, those families are also more likely to seek out and register for other community services and activities available to them. These include such resources as the swimming programs, summer camps and other library events, such as story times. They develop relationships with outreach professionals and hence gain familiarity with local agencies and increase their knowledge of how to access resources. Their children are more likely to become literate in both their native language and English, and in general, their appreciation of literature increases. Of those families served over the 11 years since the inception of the program, many have increased their home libraries and have attended ESL classes, school meetings and other community events more often than those who have not participated.*

Nancy Hemmingway (CLS Inverness) and Bonny White (Sr. Branch Manager, West Marin) visited with the kindergarten parents at the Inverness School "cry and bye" where parents, teachers, PTSA, ELAC, and librarians all come together to welcome new parents to the school year. This event has taken place at the Jack Mason Museum in the past, but this year, Principal Ann Harris decided to try it at school. She thought they might be losing some parents between the school and the library, and she was right as attendance was almost double what they usually get. Lesson learned for the library – we need to take our services to our patrons where they are!

Fairfax Branch had a very successful end-of-summer gaming night for teens on August 19 coordinated by Shereen Ash (Librarian 1). 19 kids attended who played Rock Star, Wii tennis, Dance Dance Revolution, or raced cars at the PCs.

**STAFF UPDATES:** Fairfax now has a new Branch Manager, Margaret Miles. Margaret was most recently the Library Director in Plumas County and started with Marin County on August 8. She brings with her an enthusiasm for excellent public service, a special fondness for children's service and a love of music! Welcome to our library family, Margaret.

Late breaking news—Terry Jones (CLS, Bookmobile) has been honored by her more than 2000 County colleagues by being named Employee of the Month for September. Among the perks attached are a special ceremony at the Board of Supervisors and her very own all parking place for a month at the Civic Center. All of us who have worked with Terry are in awe of her enthusiasm, energy, kindness and professionalism – congratulations Terry!

**MEDIA MENTIONS:** The Marin IJ published 38 Brief/Calendar mentions. We had 12 mentions in the West Marin Citizen, 9 in the Point Reyes Light, and one in jweekly.com. We also had a long feature article about our “Traveling Postcards” Summer Reading program in the Larkspur-Corte Madera Patch.

**BUDGET:** The following donation was taken to the Board of Supervisors: \$2,300 from Jeff Craemer to the Marin County Free Library. Local benefactor, Jeff Craemer, donated \$2,300 to the Anne T. Kent California Room for which \$2,000 will allow the Library to contract with oral historian Marilyn Geary to conduct 10 new oral histories for the Anne T. Kent California Room and \$300 to augment the material’s budget and acquire additional primary and secondary sources on Marin and California history.

**LITERACY:** This has been an eventful summer for the Joint Literacy Program. With the cutbacks in funding from donors and from the State, services had been drastically reduced. Earlier in the year several staff left, the program manager, Susan Charlton left in August and the City of San Rafael has just laid off the remaining two permanent staff members due to lack of funds. The San Rafael Literacy office remains open two days a week, staffed by the new interim Executive Director, Robin Carpenter. Robin and the Marin Literacy Board are working tirelessly to update and maintain the tutor database, support student/tutor pairs, and to develop a strategic plan that maximizes funding opportunities. Two other major components of MLP remain intact and are continuing to serve their communities efficiently and effectively. FLAGship (Families Learning and Growing) is funded by First Five of Marin through next June. The West Marin Literacy program, housed in the Point Reyes Creamery building, continues to be funded by the Marin County Free Library and provides service and creates effective partnerships in the West Marin community. MCFL’s contract with the Joint Literacy Program expires October 1. We will continue to support the West Marin program with the goal of eventually being able to contract for services in other areas of our district through the Marin Literacy Program.