

Director's Report

March 2008

ADMINISTRATION

Community Contacts

- CAL Executive Board about Intellectual Freedom Issue
- DDA Executive Director Chip Steiner about DDA membership
- County Manager Frank Lancaster about Annual Report
- District Resident about his concerns with the Wellington situation
- Kevin Duggan of the Coloradoan
- Cherry Sokoloski of the North Forth News

Operations Overview

A number of efficiencies were noted this past month:

- Savings in staff time and an increase in customer service resulted when our technology staff provided a way for patrons to place and be notified about their holds.
- A long-in-the-making technology improvement is soon to be available that will streamline the scheduling of meeting rooms. It will provide more accuracy and convenience to patrons and staff. The District will have lower costs for the software because of partnering with City IT to pay for the product license.
- Staff are using virtual meeting attendance more frequently rather than commuting to Denver or other parts of the state to participate in a meeting. A related technology has been utilized more frequently for staff to have national symposiums available on-line providing the latest examples of best practices from other libraries and library graduate programs. This month the LMT listened to a discussion about the future of public libraries and how to best prepare our spaces to service current and future needs.
- The library district saved over \$103,000 in the past three years using a disk cleaner purchased with Friends of the Library funds. The disk checker and cleaner cost about \$30,000 and paid for itself in the first year it was used.

PLA Conference

This conference, held every two years, is totally aimed at public library services and issues. The 10 staff members who attended all said that this was probably the most useful library conference they had ever experienced.

There were 200 programs and roundtable discussions on subjects as diverse as services to teens, early childhood literacy, marketing the library, designing facilities and remodeling spaces to meet the changing needs of library patrons. Nearly 200 library vendors were available to show their latest innovations and products to the 10,000 library professionals who attended the conference in Minneapolis. My focus was multi-faceted but primarily I attended the administrative and facility class tracks. It is gratifying to see that our library continues to be included as a front runner in our profession. Another value to this conference that is immeasurable is the networking we all experienced with other professionals who are working on similar approaches to improving services.

Southeast Branch

Trustee Kalkowski attended the monthly construction meeting held on-site at Bayer's construction trailer on March 22. She provided a complete report of the meeting for library staff who normally attend but were in Minneapolis for the conference.

- Concrete pour to start: April 9, 2008
- LEED certification points are being developed; Bayer isn't providing High Occupancy Vehicles designated parking

- Art in Public Places staff are still reviewing whether incorporating the library artwork in bike racks is going to work but they determined that adding letters to the light poles won't work
- Bayer is planning a second Grand Opening Celebration in March 2009 in deference to the City's request that it occur before the April changes in the City Council. The District's only input will be whether or not we want to have our grand opening at the same time Bayer does their second one.

Friends of the Library

The FOL Board continued their by-laws discussion. I proposed that volunteers from the FOL Board meet with program staff so they can discuss Friends ideas that programs staff might want to develop using the FOL funds. This year, the Friends were pleased that the library has taken a more prominent role in the Community Read activity.

Library Trust

The Trust held their annual brunch at Harmony Library. About 81 people attended to hear the presentation on the Southeast Branch by Architect Joseph Montalbano.

Communication

A "Director's Page" has been developed and added to the Website. I feel it is becoming more urgent that we assess the data that we are providing about the library and consider how we might reorganize the data to be more easily navigated. I will be meeting with Carson and Paula to discuss this need and how we might address the situation in the short term.

I accompanied Board President Mary Atchison to the City Council meeting on April 1 where she presented our 2007 Annual Report. Council expressed their appreciation for a clear, attractive and effective report and commended the Board and staff on how well the Library District has made the transition to self-governance.

Personnel and Human Resources

Two staff Job Analysis Questionnaires were evaluated by City HR upon request by their library supervisors. Carson Block was reclassified from Technology Coordinator to Library IT Director. This was a promotion of two pay grades and was based on his current job duties and responsibilities. The second reclassification was for Vicky Hayes. She was raised from a Library Assistant to a Librarian based on her current job duties and education. This was an increase of one pay range.

Jeff, Carson and I met with HR staff about implementing on-line performance evaluations. They are working with us to adapt the system used by the City to our Library District evaluation process. This will require some changes in the content that our evaluations will reference. We need to provide a mission statement and values in order to evaluate staff according to our District goals rather than the City's goals. Our job descriptions are currently included in the evaluation system and are being used to form the basis of the on-line process.

CIRCULATION SERVICES

Five weeks into the RFID retro-conversion and the team has completed their work at Harmony and moved to Main. Approx 100,000 items have been tagged so far. At Main the team started with collections in the Children's area and have completed the Colorado Shelf, World Languages, Board Books, Picture Books, the Spanish shelves and Red Dots. In addition to working on the "collections" of the day the team also tags all materials returned via the check-in room and transit crates from Harmony. Approx 25% of materials returned to Harmony still need to be tagged and Circ/Shelving staff there have taken on that task. Tech Services has been tagging all new materials going to each branch. Tech Services staff and volunteers have been trained in tag placement to facilitate this need.

Circulation received a huge "gift" from systems with the implementation of our new customized hold slips for items on the self-help hold shelf. Now instead of hand writing each slip for the hundreds of holds processed daily; staff can now print the slips that contain the correct initials (in the correct order), the day and date the item expires from the shelf as well as an identifier letting staff know if the patron receives notification of their hold by email or phone. This enhancement allows staff to process holds about 30% faster, allowing them to provide better desk and check-in room coverage and customer service.

In looking at stats from this year compared to last, we are seeing a 4% overall increase in circulation and an 8% increase in holds being placed on materials.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Get ready for a meaty report! March usually is a hectic month with Summer Reading Program (SRP) programs, prizes, publicity and printed materials being created, solicited, analyzed, and confirmed. But, in the midst of this, our large, heavily-used color printer named "Hagrid" decided to die. Much of the month was spent by staff in Children's and Systems Administration trying to resurrect it while coming up with workarounds, substitute printers and re-arrangement of project schedules. Serendipitously, new copy/printing/faxing machines were already being investigated, and thanks to Facilities Technician Rob Stansbury, these trial machines are presenting us with some options.

A large project that has been in the works for over a year made headways this past month as we began incorporating use of the Event Management Systems (EMS) from Dean Evans and Associates. This powerful software program allows us to use networked technology in scheduling meeting rooms, computer labs, study rooms, and even display cases. Early this month, accommodations were confirmed with the City's MIS department for the Library to "piggyback" on their server and licenses. This saves us thousands of start up dollars while we try out the system. We pay for use of licenses, the EMS training, and our portion of the maintenance on the City's server. Little by little we are entering the information for scheduled meetings and classes. Soon we will more widely train staff in how to use the system. Ultimately, we will be announcing to our user groups that they will encounter new, consistent procedures and regulations to reserve meeting rooms at either Main or Harmony Library and staff will be able to serve them better with complete coordinated information when they call. Stay tuned!

Another money-saving process that is being used more frequently is virtual meeting attendance for state level meetings. Recently, Lu Benke attended a Denver area Intellectual Freedom Committee meeting via Skype, a free shareware program that allows listening and viewing at remote locations. On April 1, Lu will also "attend" by free phone access an AskColorado organizational meeting being held in Denver. Finally, the recent Public Library Association Conference (PLA) held in Minneapolis made its conference paper-free with handouts and PowerPoint presentations available online and proceedings available in audio. We will be sharing the best of our week in Minneapolis with our staff through these virtual means over the next few months. Let us know if you would like to listen to or see some of these excellent presentations on a wide variety of topics from how to institute a books-by-mail program to how to get the most out of branding your library.

Library Assistant Erin Senseman continues to temporarily fill in the gap in bilingual library services, working with Adult Services Bilingual Library Assistant Jimena Pena in reaching out to diverse groups in our community. She celebrated Read Across America Day by reading aloud in Spanish at the Family Center and she and Jimena represented the Library at the International Children's Carnival in the Lory Student Center on March 30. These community events allow us to both provide fun such as craft projects for the children and parents while promoting our materials, services and upcoming programs.

Puppetry also figured predominantly in our month. Denver puppeteer extraordinaire Patti Smithsonian worked with staff honing and refreshing our puppetry skills in a workshop funded by the Friends. Patti also presented two puppet shows to our customers, and the morning one fell victim to the “new” fire code capacity reduction. We admitted the allowed 80 then turned away over 40 disappointed children and caregivers.

That gave renewed urgency to communications with the City’s Building and Zoning Department and the Poudre Fire Authority (PFA). We are happy to report that new assessments of the capacity of the room are underway. We are working with PFA staff to make sure we are maintaining safety as we figure out numbers based on two levels—with chairs and tables or with very few chairs and mostly children. During Spring Break Week, this evaluation process allowed us to try out accommodating a lot more children and caregivers at the puppet shows held at Main and minimize, though not eliminate, overflowing crowds.

Other special programs in the month of March include the Learning Fun for the Very Young, a fair gathering representatives from nine community resources and attracting over 140 parents and caregivers.

Special Services Coordinator Barbara Crandall has 2007 statistics for volunteer hours:

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>
Volunteer Hours:	15,553.0	13,765.0	13,778.0
Number of Volunteers:	700	600	660
FTEs:	7.5	6.6	6.6

Interesting notes about these statistics are that City cuts from 2005 to 2006 generated a dip in volunteer use because of reduction in staff and resources. There were fewer staff to train and oversee volunteers and fewer materials needing processing by volunteers in Technical Services. It was also expected that the move of volunteer-laden Local History to the Museum would show additional reduction in the number of volunteers and hours from 2006 to 2007. However, the number of volunteers actually increased 10% and the volunteer hours also increased some. Volunteer recruitment and placement continues weekly in both libraries and a list is being kept of community members interested in becoming volunteers at the new Southeast Branch.

Library volunteers—including all of you—will be celebrated at our annual Volunteer Brunch at 10 a.m., Saturday, April 19 at the Senior Center. We hope you will join us to both receive our appreciation and to visit with all our other wonderful volunteers.

Ending this report on a very positive note is the news that one of our staff members, Library Assistant Vicky Hays has had her position re-evaluated through a Job Analysis Questionnaire (JAQ). The result is that her work has been determined to be at a librarian level. Vicky Hays has worked on and off with the Library since 1969 when she started as a page in the Carnegie Library building. Over the years, she has set and accomplished goals of getting her B.S. degree at CSU in 1997 in Early Childhood Education and then an M.L.S. at Texas Women’s University in 2005. Her role over the last few years in the Children’s Services Department has been to be the Library’s representative for Early Literacy in the community and in the state, leading staff in the Every Child Ready to Read initiative providing workshops, trainings, and materials based on early brain development research.

REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES

The end of February marked the 3rd anniversary of the Friends of the Library gift of the Disc Checker and ECO Master. These two machines are used to check and repair our damaged CDs and DVDs. Disks that are sent to be checked and repaired go through a four step process. First the disks are wiped with cleaner and examined for cracks. The disks are then processed through the disk checker. The checker allows us to see if the disk is still able to play. Those disks that fail in the checker are sent through the ECO Master for cleaning. The fourth step is to recheck the disk to make sure the problem was fixed and they are ready for circulation.

- Approximately one percent of the disks are un-repairable due to cracks.
- Out of 21,373 disks checked in the last three years, 15,593 disks were returned to circulation after being wiped with a cleaner and sent through the checker saving almost \$103,227 in replacement costs a year.
- Over the three years, 5,780 disks were sent to be cleaned saving an average of \$34,880 in replacement costs a year.
- Disks can be cleaned up to 3 times.

This month we added a new partner in helping us recycle discarded books. The Colorado Talking Book Library picked up 10 boxes of discarded large print books. The Colorado Talking Book Library is a free service to Coloradans of all ages who are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical or learning disabilities. CTBL provides recorded, Braille and large-print books and magazines as well as a small collection of descriptive videos.

Adult programming is centrally coordinated for the system out of the Main library with staff programmers from Main and Harmony utilizing both facilities for their programs. Because of this system, programs held at Harmony may be reported in this Director's report and happenings at Main may be reported in Harmony's report. Among the variety of programming for April are two programs that will be happening at Harmony, The Glade Reservoir Forum and History Comes Alive @ the Library. The Glade Reservoir Forum will be held at the Front Range Community College Student Center on Monday, April 7th from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. FRCC and the Society of American Foresters Front Range Student Chapter are helping sponsor the program by providing the room and promoting the forum to campus groups. The room can hold up to 150 attendees plus the panel and filming equipment. The forum will be structured like the Uranium forum with a moderator and representatives from both sides of the issue. Tickets will be available at the door 30 minutes before the program. The March History Comes Alive @ the Library program with Madame Curie almost reached room capacity with 135 in attendance. Augusta Tabor will be at the Harmony Library on Friday, April 25th from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Office has finalized the following projects:

- Created March programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Facilitated Planning for Results meeting for LMT input on Goals and Objectives and Organizational Competencies
- Created BOT Presentation on Planning for Results Service Responses
- Sent out 12 press releases and made 5 media follow up calls (from 3/1-3/31)
- Updates website weekly
- Designed the 2007 Annual Report
- Coordinated library news column for the *Fort Collins Forum*
- Arranged for National Library Week promotions and events at the Libraries
- Attended PLA Conference and attended 11 seminars from "Library Marketing" track
- Attended Gates Foundation Turning the Page Library Advocacy Training
- Helped with "day of" organization of Library Trust Brunch Fundraiser

The following projects have been started:

- Annie Walk planning
- Implemented internal Communications Team meetings
- Working with CSU to get a marketing/public relations intern