

DIRECTOR'S REPORT **April 2006**

Automation Project – The staff, each day, gain a higher level of competency on the new system. Added to the demands of learning a new system, staff had to enter each patron into the new system as a new patron; the first days and weeks were grueling. We are beginning to see repeat patrons, which means they are already in the system and this dramatically streamlines the checkout process. However, each library system has its own peculiarities that must be embraced and this process takes more time. It must be noted, there is no really good library automated system that works for all types of libraries in a multi-type consortia. Regardless of this fact, being a member of a consortia was seen as vastly superior to being a “stand-alone” district, by the state library, the library board, and the district administration, we must learn to “love the one you are with!” Endeavor is designed primarily to meet academic library needs. VALNet, until recently, was under the leadership of Lewis Clark State College, meaning that many of the policies that were implemented were more aligned with academic needs. Since LCSC joined NIAL (North Idaho Academic Libraries) the remaining VALNet libraries have been learning to take on the consortia leadership role with all its responsibilities. This has been a steep learning curve but the director's of the Lewiston City Library, Asotin County Library, Lewiston School District libraries, and Prairie-River Library District have done an outstanding job. That does not mean that there are not still many questions that must be addressed, because there are, it just means that they are working hard to fill the void left by LCSC's departure and they are working toward consensus on the shared policies.

Latah County Library District entered at a good time, in so far as we now are at the table helping set policy for VALNet. Our voice is probably more easily heard now than it might have been had all the policy issues already been resolved. What this means is that staff have many questions for which there are no easy answers. When these answers are necessary to determine procedures that leaves one in a very precarious place. Good thing I've been saying all along that all the change this district is undertaking puts us in a plane “flying it while at the same time building it.” I first heard this when I was hired as a department head to help build a new academic library on a new academic branch campus in the Arizona State University system. Not everyone is comfortable in this type of ever changing environment and for those that want a “status quo” defined and then left untouched are going to be most uncomfortable with this kind of change. Change seems to be the “status quo” however, regardless of what your line of work.

VALNet Board of Directors – The meeting was cancelled due to a family emergency experienced by the person who is responsible for drafting the budget. We are in the process of setting another date, hopefully, before the Board meeting so I can report more at that time.

Accounting Software Project – Carol continues to enter data and learn how to use it to its fullest capacity.

Moscow Library Lower Level Project – Very little progress given Carol is still working on the new accounting system, interspersed with payroll twice a month.

New Computers – Andrew is getting the new computers installed. What complicates this project is that the new computers are in some cases, replacing computers that are then being moved to replace the computer that is ultimately being taken off the network. This mandates that an individual files must be moved to a different computer and then removed from the old one. All of this takes time. This project should be complete by the end of April.

Branch Visits – I visited most of the branches after Patti met with the staff on March 21, to unveil the tiered plan proposal. Staff has many questions, most of which are the details that they will be included in the development of. I suggested that the supervisors begin to make a list of the work they have been unable to complete or that in meeting deadlines causes undue stress. This should be part of the information that those developing the details of the plan, assuming it is approved by the board, will need to know. It is all too easy for the supervisors to get anxious over a lack of information, given they are

working in the field by themselves. It is not an enviable place to be but then this fact represents a large part of the underlying reason why a tiered plan or some other, as yet unidentified, option must be enacted soon.

Branch Information

Bovill – March has been a busier than usual month since joining the VALNet system with issuing new cards and learning how to route materials to the right places. The response from the patrons with the new system has been great, they seem to enjoy being able to browse and request items from other libraries. The last week of March was spring break and we had a steady stream of kids and computer users for the week, it kept things very busy. Now my mind is set on gearing up and pulling together summer reading programs. I hope to have an enjoyable program this summer, it sounds like a fun theme, Paws Claws Scales and Tales. Some of the things I have in mind are WSU Raptor Club, Fish and Game Dept., Latah County Canine program, and a local miniature horse breeder to name a few of the ideas. My friends group is very excited about helping with the programs this year and I will be very happy to have the extra help.

Deary – This is a combined February/March report since ours didn't get in last month! Part of the migration process was the "pick and scan", where every item in the library was scanned to show its location as Deary. Deary's Friends of the Library organized a team of volunteers who worked in two hours shifts, with many working a lot longer. A heartfelt thanks goes to Jenna, Aileen and Susie MacPherson; Sandy Dalton; Nathan, Seth and Diane Rathbun; Maxine Cole; Bill and Sue Mitchell; Thomasina Blevins; Lynne Rains; Tina Aldrich and Eleanor Proctor cheerfully worked pulling books and cleaning shelves. Having such wonderful volunteers willing to do whatever is necessary is one of the things that makes our Friends group so special!

March has been a learning month, with going live on the new system. A lot of what we trained for is now becoming 'familiar', so things are settling down. I enjoy seeing the smile on a patron's face when, after filling out the new card application, they get to "choose" their new card. Some know right away, some have to study each one. It is a pleasant little part of the process!

More next month!

Genesee – March came to the library like a lion and stayed. Perhaps April will be lamb like.

Bringing our new circulation system to life and getting accustomed to it has been exciting. Our patrons are very pleased to have a wider library world at their disposal. The only complaints I've heard are about making requests from the catalog. Some people find it to be awkward compared to the old way. They will adapt. The Friends met here on 16 March. The chairman is leaving town, so they need to find a new person.

Those folks who turned in their old cards are waiting to see how lucky they are. From the donation stash I was able to send up a few DVD's and a book. Also Diane Potter donated a candle, handmade pot-holder and some soap to the cause.

At one point I was wishing for another 2 or 3 PAC's in here. All the machines were busy and I had to do a quick search for a patron from my workstation. It doesn't happen very often, but we're here to provide information instantly. It adds to the adventure!

On March 29, Paula Coomer was the guest for Latah County Writes. For her first session she read from her work. Six people attended and enjoyed the reading. The first week of April she'll return for the writing workshop.

Story time picked up a little. There were three programs with 21 in attendance.

Substitutes from within the community have been lined up and both have been coming in for training.

Julietta – Juliaetta was busy, busy, and busy in March: Issuing new cards picking and scanning books returned that were checked out on Sirsi. We have also had many of our patrons returning videos and books to Juliaetta from other VALNet libraries. They were waiting patiently for the migration to take place and as soon as the word was out, the items starting appearing in the book drop and on the return counter. We are learning all the little quirks of Endeavor and the patrons are enjoying using the OPAC to put their holds on either here at the library or from home.

All the classes have made the trip down from Juliaetta Elementary School to receive their new cards. There are only 8 students who haven't returned their new application forms for the new cards. Story times have been ultra busy with from 13 to 21 in attendance each week. We have a very fun group this year!

I think spring has arrived to the valley. Flowers are blooming and the trees are budding and the robins are everywhere.

Moscow –

Access Services –

Adult Services –

Business Office –

Outreach -

Tech Services –

Youth Services

Potlatch – She will be giving it in person.

Troy – March has been a busy month at the Library. We are still learning new things about Voyager/ValNet. I'm sure we will learn all the tricks eventually. It does seem to be getting easier. Patrons are still coming in to get their new cards. They are excited about having a selection of cards and having 2 sizes of cards. Patrons seem to be bringing their new cards in more since having a small one for their key chain. The Troy Friends donated 7 book bags and 7 Troy Centennial silver coins for the drawing March 31. The Troy Friends hosted the Writers Workshop at the Library, March 22. We had a great turnout. Author, Mary Clearman Blew, read several of her short stories for the group. It was a very enjoyable evening. The school kids were hoping the 3 new computers would be installed during their Spring Break. Nothing yet, but we can hope maybe tomorrow. We only have 2 computers working now. I am sure the kids will appreciate 3 new computers when they arrive. A big Thank You goes to Sandy Taylor for the wonderful Spring display in our display case.