

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **July 2006**

As I prepare to say good-bye to the Latah County Library District, I want to reflect back on my time as Director. I began February 3, 2003 and will be leaving my position the end of July. During this time, a great deal has been accomplished for which we can all feel much pride.

The most obvious improvements have been in the physical plants. Bovill's Friends group had new shelving built for their library. The new shelving is beautiful oak along the walls, replacing shelving that jutted out into the middle of the room, making only a narrow isle available for public use. Thanks to a grant written by Pat Eck the Bovill Library has a very nice covering over the sidewalk leading to the library, making access during the winter much easier for young and old alike.

The Deary Library underwent some dramatic changes. The size of the collection was dramatically reduced by eliminating the old, worn out and un-used materials. The walls were painted and the entire layout was re-arranged. It is a very cheery and inviting library and is heavily used by the Deary community.

The Friends of the Troy Library have done some sprucing up of their library, primarily with some new very comfortable and inviting seating. Their library is relatively new compared to most of the other District libraries so their work wasn't as daunting as some of the others.

You can hardly recognize the Juliaetta Library; they have truly renovated it into a "swan." Again, a very active Friends group has written numerous grants and raised money to re-carpet the library, put down new tile in the entryway and built some shelves for donated materials. Their furniture was re-upholstered and they removed some of the shelving opening the library up for more use by the public. The library's front door was replaced making the library much more secure.

Thanks to generous donations made to the Genesee Library they were able to replace their old metal shelving with beautiful wooden shelves. The new shelves are shorter allowing the otherwise small space to look very spacious by opening up the room.

Potlatch has a very new building, only six years old. It is a very attractive facility but as with any aging building it must be maintained. The Potlatch Friends take great pride in keeping their building looking good.

The City of Moscow had approved \$20,000 for new carpet for their public library, so this was a huge project that was waiting for my arrival. The board approved using some of the Fund Balance money and the Moscow Friends contributed considerable dollars so that in the process of replacing the carpet we were also able to paint the upper floor, take out some walls to open up space, and get some new furniture for the kids and young adult areas. With all of the shelving being removed allowing for removal of the old carpet and laying of the new we decided to reconfigure the shelving in the adult area. This again opened up the area making it much more user friendly.

The computers throughout the District ranged from old to dinosaurs, so that was another big project that we undertook. Again, the board approved use of Fund Balance money to replace about 25 computers. This year we finally completed replacement of all computers older than four years. Four years is seen by most as the oldest a computer can be and still be functional in our ever-changing information environment. We now have the District on a rotation of replacing ¼ of its computers each year, ensuring that both the public and staff have reliable machines on which to conduct their research and do their work.

Yet, another massive undertaking was a revision and updating of all the District's administrative and personnel policies. They had not been revised for about ten years. We now have an annual review of all policies established, allowing for staff and public input into the process.

To invite public input into all District business four committees were established, per the Board's By-Laws – those being: finance, planning, personnel, and policy.

During my tenure the District's website has undergone two major revisions. Both of the revisions were designed to make the site more user-friendly. It is now possible to read the District's Policies, Board agenda, minutes, and other supporting documentation as well as access the on-line catalog and electronic databases.

The electronic databases have been added in an effort to make access to a broad range of information easy regardless of where you live in the county. The one database that had the most obvious appeal is the automotive one, where home mechanics can immediately get the information needed to fix their car. Prior to this database a person would have to request that certain pages be copied, since the only set of the costly automotive books resides in Moscow, and sent via courier to one of the branches. This process obviously would take days – time most don't have to wait.

QuickBooks finally replaced the District's cumbersome and difficult to use accounting system. We are now able to do all the accounting functions in a fraction of the time the old system took.

One of the first charges I received from the Board was to do a salary comparison study to see if and how much Latah County Library District salaries should be adjusted to make them more competitive. This study was completed and all staff received varying pay increases bringing them in line with other area libraries. It also ensured that all staff doing the same job are paid at the same rate.

Joining the VALNet consortium was no small feat. It began with writing a grant for \$105,000 to the State Library. The grant request was approved in March 2005. We went live on the VALNet system February 24, 2006. This migration has had a significant impact on the patrons and staff alike. It represents a multitude of changes beginning with a dramatic increase in the number of items available on the OPAC (On-Line Public Access Catalog) all the way to every patron being registered as a new person into the system. New library cards were issued to each patron, which were selected from a choice of five beautiful scenes. Staff have had to learn a new system both the technical aspects as well as numerous new policies that resulted from being part of a consortium. We are still working out many procedural details but overall, the reactions have been positive.

And finally, the most daunting challenge that I faced has been the budget. However, I am leaving knowing that Latah County Library District now has a budget that allocates its resources in a way that ensures that there is both staff to service the patrons as well as a continual influx of new materials. There is sufficient money spent on operations so staff have the tools they need to do their jobs and allow us to keep the seven libraries clean and well-maintained. It must be noted, in an effort to help offset some of the maintenance expenses incurred by the branches that the communities are stepping up and helping out with increased volunteer service and monetary donations.

I am proud of the work that we have accomplished during my tenure as Director of the Latah County Library District. All of this was possible because of the excellent staff and the willing cooperation of many Friends throughout the county.

My thanks and appreciation goes out to the Board of Trustees, who has been challenged during my tenure to take on a more active role in District business by setting policy and wrestling with many difficult issues. They oftentimes have a thankless job because much of what they are called to decide is not universally embraced but they are working very hard to fulfill their responsibilities with as much integrity and objectivity as possible.

My husband and I are moving back to Montana, which is home to both of us. We are eager to begin this next phase of our life journey. I wish the Latah County Library District a bright future.

## **Branch Information**

Bovill – Since the board meeting in Bovill a short time ago I have had a couple of Summer Reading Programs that have gone well. Betsy came up to tell stories to the kids and although she had a very small group I think that it

went well. I had several kids in the library at the time but they were using the computers and listened from a distance. I made the decision to turn the computers off from now on during a program to get all the kids involved and not have them distracted at the computer stations. I also had the Idaho Dept of Fish and Game do a presentation for me that was very enjoyable. We had all types of animal pelts, skulls and horns to look at and feel. That was a well attended program with 14 kids and 4 adults. At this time I have 35 kids signed up for summer reading and I am really stressing to the kids the importance of finishing the program this year so that we can try to get as close to 100% finishers as possible and have a big party at the end. My Friends group is working hard to collect items for the raffle on Bovill Days. Hopefully this years raffle will be as successful as last years.

Deary - Summer Reading Program in Deary is in full swing! We have had 3 great programs with a total of 96 kids and 20 adults attending. The first one was a sign-up party hosted by the Friends of Deary Library. The children made bookmarks cut from the accu-cut machine in Moscow! At the second program Doreen, Jordan and Kelsey Ducommun presented a demonstration about Alpaca "fiber" and how to use a spinning wheel, drop spindle and felting needles. Each child got to try their hand at spinning, etc., and took a bag of "fiber" home with them! The third program was our own "Batsy" Bybell. She told stories and used hand puppets - the kids loved it! They "helped" her with the animal noises - it was a lively time! With school out the computers are getting heavy use - there are people waiting at the door each day we are open to sign up. Deary's computer center is open again so that they have that resource also. More next month!

Genesee – No report received.

Juliaetta – June was a month full of summer reading activities for Juliaetta. The programs were all well attended and presenters all showed up except for one who called in sick. I was on sick leave after my back surgery but Cynthia reported that things were running pretty smoothly. I was glad to have the opportunity to interact with the two candidates for director that came into town for interviews. Thanks to the board for allowing us to participate in this process. I will be back at work after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I have missed the patrons and all the fun of summer reading so it will be good to be back!

Potlatch – June has been a very busy and HOT month at the library. Summer Reading is moving right along and program attendance has been higher than normal for Potlatch. We had wonderful support from the community for the Summer Reading Program, with donations still coming in as of last week. At this point it is over 900 dollars. The Friends are working on getting a bike rack for the library and as many of them have been out of town, we won't be working on any Adult programming until the fall. On a personal note, I had a new grandson on June 6th, Joseph Thomas Quiring.

Troy – June has been a busy month at the Troy Library. Summer Reading Program is going full force. The programs have been well attended and the kids seem to be very excited about reading. It is nice to see new faces each year. The Summer Program at the school is not able to come to the Library this summer. Their funding has been cut and grades 1-4 were not able to attend this summer. Computers are being kept busy, not just by kids. Adults seem to be using them more.

We have also been busy with attending breakfasts and presentations for the candidates for the new director. We have attended two. The board has a difficult decision ahead of them. The Troy Library hosted a Tour of the Library for Daniel Siebersma. Several members of the different communities were here to met the candidate and ask questions. The Troy Friends provided homemade goodies and cold drinks.