

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

August 2006

Transition—July and August have been eventful months. Janice McPherson left her position as Library Director at the end of July. Sylva and Robert Staab hosted a farewell potluck for her at their home, which was attended by many well-wishers from the library staff, the library Board of Trustees, and the Friends of the Library. We wish Janice continued happiness and success in her new home in Billings, Montana.

I began training with Janice for the Interim Director position on July 19th. We spent several days together and discussed a wide range of issues facing the library district. I felt fortunate to have this overlapping period of time with her and appreciate her insight, experience, and support.

The first day on the job as Interim Director, I learned the power of the director's word. I therefore simplified my short-term ambitions to consist of three ideas:

- 1) To listen. Toward that end I have met with individual managers, held two managers' meetings and have set up meetings with branch supervisors. I spoke with Margie Fitzmorris at the Troy library, Jan Welles at the Juliaetta Library, and Donna Quiring from Potlatch during her hours in Moscow. I have a meeting scheduled in Troy on Wednesday, August 9th, to speak with the branch supervisors together, and hope to complete my visits to the other branches by the end of August. Scheduling has been affected by the fact that Summer Reading is over and staff members at all levels are embracing their richly-deserved vacation time.

I also met with Jan Wall, a former Library District employee, and currently the North Idaho Consultant for the Idaho Commission for Libraries (ICFL—formerly the Idaho State Library), and have visited with Dawn Wittman of the Lewiston City Library, one of our VALNet partners.

- 2) To facilitate/organize/lead efforts to re-group. The district has made significant changes in the past few months—including joining a consortium and losing a strong director. There are many questions about the library's future. I am compiling the ideas, suggestions, and concerns that I hear, with the intention of working together with the managers, staff and the library board to identify and address the issues of highest importance.
- 3) To emphasize the need to maintain the library district's momentum. I feel that the past year has seen the district achieve exciting things, including the formation of a Friends Group at each branch and our new membership in the VALNet consortium. I would like the district to build on this momentum and work to diversify our sources of support and funding. Efforts to maintain momentum so far include emphasizing this need with staff members, promoting the success of the district's Summer Reading programs via our website, and working to emphasize the positive contributions our district libraries make in their communities.

For the board's information, one decision I made early on was to maintain my office on the main floor of the Moscow library. The idea of the library director having a more public presence in the library has been debated for years, and I can say that for me the decision was absolutely the right one. Already several patrons have expressed their appreciation for my visibility, including patrons from outside Moscow. Having the office upstairs is also making the transition with and training of the Access Services Manager easier. Carol will be moving into Janice's old office in order to gain the quiet that she needs for her job, and her old office space in the Branch Services area will be reconfigured as a staff workspace. A corollary benefit of this decision is that we can reallocate the money that had previously been set aside to create a workspace in the downstairs storage room.

Access Services Management Team—My first task as Interim Director was to hire my own replacement. We posted the job opening internally, working in consultation with board member Sylva Staab, and conducted an interview process with interested candidates. The position of Access Services Manager is now filled with a three-way job share involving Connie Anderson-Chalker, June Falk, and Sally Perrine. Each

member of the team has one or more assigned days as Manager, and the team as a whole will be meeting weekly with me to help smooth the transition. This arrangement has a two-month probationary period, after which both the configuration itself and salary will be reviewed. I am very pleased with the level of energy and excitement that the team of experienced district staff brings to the job, and excited about what we can accomplish in the next few months. I feel very fortunate to work with the people that I do.

Summer Reading—Cathy Ensley is on vacation this week. I hope to have her summary by the board meeting, but in the meantime please see the photo page she created on the library district website.

VALNet—Now that the software upgrade is over, and Summer Reading programs have largely finished, we have time to address some VALNet issues. As Jeannie mentions in her report from Tech Services, she has mastered the mechanism the library software allows us and is now able to create “packets” to facilitate the movement of library materials throughout the district. The plan is to allow the collection librarians to work with branches and Access Services to address the specifics of packet size and format, frequency of rotation, and the process of creating packets.

One issue that looms large on the library horizon concerns downloadable audiobooks. Chris Sokol, Cathy Ensley and I met with a representative from NetLibrary, which is a company that provides this service to libraries. VALNet is engaged in negotiations with them for a contract that would allow any VALNet patron to download an audiobook either directly from the VALNet catalog or from the NetLibrary website. There is also a slight possibility that the ICFL may be able to fold the NetLibrary resource into the LiLI subscription package. Either way, it appears that as early as this fall we will need to be ready to deliver and promote this service to patrons.

District Brochure—The library district has grant money set aside to develop a general information brochure. This is not intended as an instructional brochure, but a promotional tool. Development of the brochure was waiting for the end of Summer Reading, and to allow a new director to help shape the publication. We hope to begin writing the brochure draft in August. Melissa Rockwood of RDesign will help with the formatting and layout.

Courier—One issue impacting the budget concerns the district courier system. Carol Kampenhout has been extremely helpful in providing numbers to help with decision making, and I am currently in discussions with managers and staff to identify the pros and cons of outsourcing our courier delivery service.

Department and Branch Library Reports

Bovill—July was a warm and busy month for Bovill. We had a couple of great programs and we had some good turnouts. The WSU Raptor Club gave a great presentation with their birds of prey and we had Doreen Ducummon from Deary with Alpaca wool and her spinning wheel here to show us how to spin the wool into yarn. Right now I have 50% of my SR signups having finished the program and I will keep it open for a couple more weeks to catch a few more that are still working on their reading.

Bovill Days was again a success for my Friends group. They made over \$500 in their raffle and book sale and gave away some great prizes. The gallon of huckleberries went for \$45 and the John Miller book “The Trees Grew Tall” went for \$50. On August 19 the Friends will be sponsoring a luncheon for Bovills clean up day. They will be offering a potato bar with all the toppings along with chips cheese and salsa. Next year will be Bovills Centennial celebration and the group is already making plans for ways to represent the library. Some thoughts being passed around are t-shirts and mugs with a picture of the building and the years that it has housed the library.

Deary—Summer Program is over! And we have heard many positive reports. Everyone really liked the presenters and the animal theme was great. The WSU Raptor Club brought several different kinds of hawks and owls. They were very well behaved, as were the children who attended the program! Bob Hasenorl had crawfish, bees, spiders and an octopus. Quite a show!

The final party was ice cream at the park and then books and prize drawings at the library, hosted by our Deary Friends of the Library. We extend a big thanks to our Friends for all the help they have given throughout the summer!

The computers have been kept really busy this summer by a number of children and adults alike. Our #3 computer was made into a catalog computer only, but gets very little use, so we may consider making it an "Adult Only". It is the only computer that is impossible to monitor, and was being inappropriately used by some of the children.

We welcome Anne as our new Director, and look forward to working with her. Her positive, cheerful outlook and great decision making skills are an asset to the library district! More next month!

Genesee—Summer Reading and its associated activities filled the Wednesdays of the month. Fortunately on those days Margaret Grieser and Vickie Fadness came in to help at the desk and with shelving. One of the most fun activities was making ice cream in the park. There I also was lucky to have some of the moms lend a hand. Genesee ended its program July 26th with 48 children on hand to receive their reading certificates and choose party prizes. Betsy and her puppet Booker added to the festivities.

This year sign ups were down from previous years. 84 kids signed up and 54 made their reading goal to claim a prize book. As in other years a few stragglers will complete their goal by the time school starts. In June I received a box of books from the Fred Meyer Foundation and they were amongst the first choices for many of the children so at this point there aren't many left.

Corleen Becker came in for several hours to train as a substitute. She's a good library user and is local. I anticipate being able to call on her to help out when I'm gone.

With SRP over business is getting back to normal, books in and books out. I noticed that the Valnet station is not as intimidating to people as it was at first. That's good news as people are able to do their own searches and requests with minimal help from me.

Juliaetta—July in Juliaetta has been very, very HOT! Summer reading has dominated our library activities this month. We have had a consistent number in attendance, averaging around 26 at each program. The Clearwater County Search and Rescue dogs and their handlers were a big hit with the children and parents alike. They put on a terrific program. The miniature horses were also a popular program for the second year in a row. The children were able to pet the horses and also have a cart ride at the park in Juliaetta. We made bird houses and everyone had lots of fun decorating their house to hang up at home. Our final part was held on July 30 at the Kendrick Park. The children and their parents were able to swim at the pool for two hours and then they polished off 48 hot dogs, 3 gallons of drinks, chips, fruits and vegetables and dip and 4 dozen cookies. A fun time was had by all and the temperature was more bearable for the day. The Friends of the Library have been a tremendous help to me this summer, providing treats and extra hands at every program. I could not have had such diverse programming this summer without their help.

I want to welcome Anne as the interim director! I am excited about working with her in her new capacity and to see what she has planned for the District.

Potlatch—Summer Reading numbers seem to be down a little, but they have until school starts August 28th to finish. I feel that some of the reason for the low numbers is that when we are usually planning and getting excited for Summer Reading, we were right in the middle of implementing Valnet. I don't know about anyone else, but I felt rushed trying to get ready for Summer Reading. The final pool party is this Saturday, August 6th, so more on that later. I have great faith in Anne and the "Troika", and am looking forward to having an uneventful 6 months. I would like to do some "remodeling" this fall. Nothing drastic, just making a few changes to make the library more user friendly and highlighting some sections to make them more visible. Now, time to start planning storytimes!

Troy—July has been a very busy month for the Troy Library. The Friends had a meeting July 5th. They thought it would be a good idea to have a magazine survey at the library, to get ready for the Adopt-a-Magazine project early this fall. Patrons are very interested in giving their opinions on the survey.

Troy Oldtimer's Day was July 15th. We had an Open House at the Library along with Julie Monroe's book signing, for her latest book, Images of America: Latah County. It went well. Julie sold several books and took orders for more. The Friends also set up a Mini Book Sell in the Library. The excitement started about 3:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Brocke's Warehouse caught on fire and was a complete loss. The parade went on as scheduled. We were represented in the parade once again. Angela Rich and her grandchildren carried the banner, "Paws ,Claws. Scales & Tales", the kids were dressed as animal trainers.

We had our last Summer Reading Program on July 27th. The Library received a grant from the Troy Rec. District to pay for the supplies for Wild @Art to do a program for us. A big thanks to the Rec. District. I don't know what I would have done without the help of Betty Leslie and Blinda Henrichs this summer. I am so lucky to have such wonderful volunteers!

I met the new Director of the After School Program at the Troy Elementary. She is very excited to work with the Library when school starts.

The good news is Anne Cheadle has taken the job of Interim Director, for the Latah Co. Library District. I am sure Anne will do a super job.

Outreach Services—Summer Reading always comes with a bang for the Outreach Services Department. Every year I've been a guest performer for each library branch and in charge of one of their regularly scheduled weekly shows. This year I tried a combination of storytelling with puppets. From the hee-haws, barks, meows, and cock-a-doodle-does from the children in the audience, the story of "The Bremen Town Musicians" was a huge success. I scaled back the outreach programs held on site to 253 children participating at seven daycares this summer. The last week is spent delivering prize books and little trinkets to each group. It is tremendously gratifying to hear the thank yous and see the excitement as they ponder over choosing exactly the right book that they "take home and get to keep forever and ever". I especially want to thank the Friends of the Moscow Public Library for funding this special program and its rewards. If they could see the delighted faces of all the children who participate in Summer Reading, they would know how essential their contributions are.

Technical Services—During the month of July Tech. Services staff was able to pretty much clean up the back-log of materials resulting from the conversion to Endeavor and VALNet. It is our goal to continue to minimize the length of time it takes to move materials from "box to shelf". Connie's 10.5 hrs. per week in Tech. and Karen Chiavaras' 3 to 4 volunteer hrs. per week, played a huge role in our ability to accomplish this. Debbie Fischer continues to maintain the serials processing.

I was able to work with Gonzaga Tech. support staff and accomplish the ability to add the Library of Congress as a remote search option while searching the Endeavor database for BIB records. The ability to do this will help reduce search time and the number of records that need to be imported from outside the system. We were also able to establish the process necessary to begin creating branch rotation packets. We are finding the Endeavor Technical Support staff at Gonzaga to be invaluable.

In July we added the second highest number of materials since 2000 (1757 in March of 2004). While the number of materials added stays fairly constant the number of materials withdrawn has decreased. To date the greatest percent of withdrawn materials is the old periodicals which have been pulled, and juvenile materials from a major weeding project that Cathy did just prior to the conversion.