

**Director of County Library Services Report  
For  
January, 2010**

**BRANCH NEWS –**

**CIVIC CENTER:** Eleven teens participated in a Saturday collaging program to create personal journals. A librarian remarked that they were extremely well-behaved, focused, and industrious – kudos to the branch for developing a program that brought out the best in our teen users.

**NOVATO:** The Novato Friends have continued to be extremely supportive of library events and programs. In January they underwrote a hugely attended art docent program and a local author program for adults; donated \$500 for toddler board books; and hosted a ribbon cutting with District 5 Supervisor Judy Arnold and the Teen Advisory Committee to celebrate the opening of the new teen area. Building on the success of a program this summer, the branch has scheduled another round of small business/job programs in partnership with the Redwood Empire Small Business Development Center.

Thanks to much hard work on the part of Amanda Foust (Acting Librarian II) and her colleagues at the branch, Novato has received a highly competitive grant from the State Library to underwrite a science initiative for teens. They will host four “fun” afterschool science programs in March/April of 2010, in partnership with staff of the UC Berkeley Physics department and hope to include NUSD science teachers and local scientists as well. Two of the young UC staff in particular are very “cool” and hopefully will inspire Novato teens to consider a career in science. They will be increasing the library’s holdings in high-interest math/science books and AV materials for teens to check out as well as adding science kits to the library’s holdings to encourage individual interest in science and math both as a field of study and potential career. The Spanish Language Services Librarian will be especially promoting this program with Latino youth and will make translators available if there’s a need. Part of the process will be measuring student interest in math/science with pre- and post-surveys and the hope is that teens who participate in the afterschool programs will come away with measurably higher interest/enthusiasm for math and science—and be more likely to think seriously about future careers in the sciences.

**WEST MARIN:** From Point Reyes, news that young Elijah F. signed his library card on his 4th birthday with his mom, Heidi. The rule in Elijah's family is that a person has to be four before getting a card, so the minute Elijah was eligible; he was in the library with bells on. Rumor has it that this new library patron wore his wristband library card all day long and then went to bed with it on. Everyone here at the library sincerely wish everyone shared Elijah's enthusiasm for their cards. As many of us know, a library card is the key to a whole new world, so welcome, Elijah!

**MARIN CITY:** Thanks to the dogged determination of Nancy Davis (Senior Librarian,) Administrative Librarian Damon Hill and the staff of the Marin City Library, the Marin City front doors have been repaired after many attempts. Hopefully the door alarm won't go off any more, summoning help at all hours of the day and night.

**CORTE MADERA:** And on another building note, staff figured out how to rearrange the extremely crowded work room and actually gained space for a couple of work stations.

**BOOKMOBILE:** After a month storms, they were ready to request an amphibious vehicle to make rounds in the pouring rain, hail and ice. Despite Highway One being closed, power outages from Dillon Beach to Bodega Bay and flooded roads, book lovers made it to every bookmobile stop. Now those are dedicated readers! Terry and Nicole now have a whole new appreciation for the meaning of wetlands since the pastures of West Marin looked a lot more like lakes instead of grassy fields. And Terry sent along a cute story about what happens when beginning Spanish meets beginning English. "The kids were very excited about a new movie which was the second in a series and they asked for the "squequel". Trying to be kind but careful to use the correct word, I kept insisting that they really were asking for the "sequel" to this movie. After going back and forth a few times, I got the whole title and finally the joke dawned on me. The movie is the second of the Alvin and the Chipmunks movies and the title is "**Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel**". Kids 5, Chipmunks 3, Terry 0. Ah well, there's always next season!"

## **STORM REPORTS**

The Bolinas Library was without power for a while on Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup> and opened an hour late, at 11:15 a.m. Fairfax notified me that they were without power on Monday evening January 25<sup>th</sup> and that they were getting ready to close, but then it came back unexpectedly so there was no interruption of public service.

## **DONATIONS**

- 1) \$2000 from the Marin Library Foundation. The funds will be used to provide for the first countywide Adult Summer Reading Program for MCFL with the theme "Water your Mind".

- 2) Contributions of \$2,041.22 from the Friends of the Corte Madera Library and \$2,518.65 from the Friends of the Marin County Free Library to be used to purchase new tables for the meeting room at the Corte Madera Library
- 3) Contribution of \$6,500 from Gail Foster to be used to purchase additional Children's books & audios for SNO.
- 4) Contribution in the amount of \$1,500 from Wells Fargo Bank to support the activities of the Library Beyond Walls program

**ONE BOOK ONE MARIN:** Michael Chabon's The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay got lots of publicity this month. Book Passage's winter newsletter had an informative article about the author and the book and the Marin IJ also ran a long article, including a nice interview with Elaine Petrocelli of Book Passage. The launch event was Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> at Book Passage and was a roaring success. No seats were to be had much after 6:30 for the 7 o'clock event and the audience was enthralled by the author's folksy, down to earth manner. There are a number of branch based events planned over the next couple of months and details are at <http://www.onebookonemarin.org/>. On Wednesday April 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., KQED host Michael Krasny will join Michael Chabon in a discussion of the novel at Dominican's Angelico Hall for a very special culminating event.

**BALLOT MEASURE:** I've been channeling Robert Burns recently "The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. " (or to be completely accurate, "gang aft agley." That has such a nice ring.) In an effort to be pro-active and forward thinking and work in problem solving mode, I assembled a large group of folks a couple of months ago who represented all the different angles that would be involved in placing a measure on the ballot this June. Lawyers, finance people, consultants, tax folks, library staff. Out of that meeting came a time line and an organized plan of operation. Needless to say, as we worked through the plan, adjustments were needed, changes were made. And we learned that just because we did something in a certain way in the last election didn't mean that we would be doing it that way this time. Thanks to the hard work of innumerable staff, both in Library Administration, the County Counsel's office and the County Administrator's office we have a package that was sent in time to be on the Board of Supervisor's agenda February 9<sup>th</sup>. The biggest change we are proposing to the Board is that the measure sunset in five years, rather than seven. Although he didn't think we needed a tracking poll, Bryan Godbe (Godbe Research) has been closely monitoring recently elections and strongly advised us that the measure had a much better chance with the shorter duration. The measure will go to the Board of Supervisors on February 9<sup>th</sup> and we will know then whether or not we have their approval.

**BUDGET:** We recently received notification from the State Library of the amount we would be receiving from the Public Library Fund (PLF.) According to the State Library website, the stated intent of the program is "to embody the State's interest in the general diffusion of information and knowledge through free public libraries; encourage lifelong learning; supplement the system of free public education; help libraries serve as sources of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, cultural backgrounds and economic status; and furnish a resource for continuing education. The funds assure the availability to every resident of the state an adequate level of public library service

regardless of the taxable wealth of the local jurisdiction providing the service.” Funds are appropriated annually in the State budget to support the program. Localities may use the funds freely so long as the funds serve the public library purposes stated in the law. A noble goal, but when we look at the funding formula things get more interesting. The Legislature establishes a target “foundation” level of service based on a per capital cost each year but has never fully funded that target. The highest year was 1999/00 when 80% of the target was distributed (\$56.8 million) and the lowest was 2008/09 when only 12% of full funding or \$12.9 million was distributed. For 2009/10 MCFL 100% funding would have been \$ 423,162 but we will actually only receive \$ 50,550. A sad note among a generally sad fiscal picture is that four libraries in the state will actually not receive anything because their local budgets were slashed so deeply that the libraries didn’t qualify as meeting the “maintenance of effort” requirement.

After discussing alternatives with the County Administrator, we have decided MCFL will submit a flat budget for 2010-2011 with the proviso that if the ballot measure does not pass, we will return to the Board of Supervisors in July to submit a supplementary budget with necessary cuts. If it does pass, we will work on the service restorations and add them back to the budget mid-year.

**PERSONNEL:** Although we had approved the applications of three Library employees to participate in the County’s early separation program, in the end only one person ended up taking advantage of the bonus and filing retirement papers. That position will be eliminated in next year’s budget and we’ll be reworking schedules to fill in the hole. We made three temporary promotions this month – Amanda Faust to Librarian II, Electronic Services; Elizabeth Cobey to Community Library Specialist; and Tricia Cummings to Community Library Specialist. Amanda is filling a vacant position. Elizabeth and Tricia will be in charge of the Marin City and South Novato libraries respectively, reporting to a Senior Librarian and getting support from a regional library. This is the model that was suggested by our Staffing Study and we have taken the opportunity to pilot it for a few months.

**PUBLICITY:** We had a healthy 36 mentions in Marin newspapers this month. Included were a major story about One Book One Marin, a “featurette” in the West Marin Citizen and lots of calendar and “In your Town” items. Five of the articles were about parcel taxes in San Anselmo and San Rafael which included references to MCFL.