

Director's Report

April 2008

ADMINISTRATION

Community Contacts

- Paula and I attended the Marketing Seminar and Chamber Spring Showcase Luncheon
- I introduced myself to the Entrepreneurial Council when they met at the library, hosted by Anne Macdonald. Anne shared some of the databases that she felt would be heavily used by small businesses.
- Paula and I met Gladys Russell, a Wellington area resident and Northern Colorado Alliance Advocate Co-chair, and discussed the many growth issues affecting the residents of the area.
- Lu Benke and Ken Draves met with representatives of the Safe Routes to School program. They learned about the plans underway to make pedestrian travel safer for the children who will be crossing the busy streets in the area of the branch. Lu mentioned that the local feeder schools include Bacon, Traut, Kruse, Zach, and Linton Elementaries; Kinard and Preston Junior Highs; and Fossil Ridge High School. She mentioned that City staff commended Bayer for the extra efforts in planning for safe traffic flow.
- I met with Dr. Ken Goldsberry, president of the Genealogy Society about changes in the meeting room policy and the partnership we have that enhances programs

Operations' Efficiencies

- Paula obtained two CSU interns to assist in Communications projects
- Friends of the Library purchased six game computers for Children's services
- Administration received an ergonomic audit resulting in a safer working environment
- Six color copiers are ordered that will save on the cost of printing colored flyers and save staff time and save staff time in helping patrons in using the public copiers.

Southeast Branch

1. Construction Schedule—Bayer and Hoar construction staff report that despite some delays they expect to remain on schedule for Building 400 where the library is located. According to the current schedule the City will be able to initiate interior construction on September 5. At our next monthly meeting in May we should have a more definite sense of the schedule.

2. Grand Opening—Bayer staff shared that the Grand Opening for Front Range Village is still planned for late March of next year, after Spring Break and before April elections. Super Target and Lowe's will open in July of this year, but grand opening events are not planned for that time. A probable date of Saturday, March 28 has been approved by Bayer and the City as a tentative date for the grand opening of Front Range Village. Paula is coordinating efforts between Bayer and the City marketing departments.

3. City Construction Process—Construction documents for the library tenant finish are complete. The City's project manager and City Purchasing staff will review, and then initiate the bid process. The City will open bidding and receive bids over the next 6 weeks or so. Once bidding has closed, the City will evaluate responses and begin the process of selecting a construction firm to complete the interior work.

Friends of the Library

President Terri Sullivan asked for a presentation of ideas from staff for enhancing the new branch using their funds. Lu is working with Terri Sullivan to set up a presentation for their members.

Library Trust

President Wayne Givens asked for a presentation on the progress of the PFR as a way of evaluating any opportunities to raise funds to assist the District in new services or facilities.

Personnel and Human Resources

City personnel representative Debbie Mossburgh met with Library managers to learn more about our work. We discussed the need to review our job classifications and pay and how the City can assist us with this job. We plan to start the process in June after the results from the MSEC compensation survey are finalized. We continue to talk with the City about incorporating the Library's core values and goals as evaluation criteria into the ITMS personnel software system so that it can be used as the libraries evaluation tool. This will happen after the Board completes its mission, goals and values retreat.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Office has finalized the following projects:

- Created April programming calendar media and e-mail releases
- Facilitated Planning for Results meeting for LMT input on Goals and Objectives and Organizational Competencies
- Facilitated 2 staff meetings to brainstorm "Activities" for PFR
- Sent out 9 press releases and made 4 media follow up calls
- Update website weekly
- Coordinated library news column for the Fort Collins Forum
- Attended Northern Colorado Public Communicators Meeting
- Attended seminar on Systematic Development of Informed Consent (SDIC)
- Attended UniverCity Quarterly update meeting
- Attended Chamber Marketing seminar
- Met with Bayer Marketing Manager to coordinate efforts
- Coordinated National Library Week activities:
 - Daily theme & giveaways
 - County proclamation
 - *Coloradoan* letter to the editor
 - KRFC interview with Brenda Carns
 - Appreciation day for staff with food
 - New website addition of video from Julie Andrews
- Obtained 2 CSU marketing/public relations interns for summer session

The following projects have been started:

- Facilitating content for new web pages for Library on Council Tree Avenue
- Annie Walk planning – currently have 5 community members on committee
- Implemented internal Communications Team meetings
- Monthly meetings with the Com-Com
- Creation of a spreadsheet to show the avenues of opportunities for communication about the District and our activities and plans

For May BOT Meeting:

Coordinated speaking points and promotional plan for new branch library on Council Tree Avenue

For June BOT Meeting:

Information will be shared on the big picture for outreach efforts and media on the strategic planning process

CIRCULATION SERVICES

Lynda Dickson, Circulation Supervisor and Chris Cortez, Assistant Circulation Supervisor, attended the National Public Library Association Conference during the last week in March. Sessions on customer self-service, retail influences in libraries, staff needs and planning were the "hot" topics of the week. Chris and Lynda attended a session titled "Not Just the Patriot Act! Coping with Law Enforcement Issues" that was extremely informative and appropriate for Circulation. Lynda felt that this was by far the best PLA conference she has had the opportunity to attend...great sessions with timely information. Chris commented after her first session that she now "gets" what the rest of us have been talking about with regard to the service model for the new branch.

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes in Circulation with regard to recycling and being "green". Staff is becoming more aware and educated about what can and cannot be recycled and is working diligently to "make a difference" at the library. Everything from receipt paper, cardboard and plastic grocery bags are all part of Circulation's recycle cycle.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

SRP, EMS, PSD, and AWE-all these TWA's (three word acronyms) abound in the Children's Services area this month. All represent significant projects that we work hard to keep as efficient and manageable as their three-letters representations.

SRP--Summer Reading Program really gets frenetic in April. Programs, prizes, and publicity are finalized and things sent off to the printer or put up on the web pages. For example, it has been decided that, to go along with our "Catch the Reading Bug" theme, the young readers in Readers to the Rescue will be raising money for the African Rainforest Conservancy (ARC) and its butterfly project. The primary cause of butterfly extinction is habitat destruction, and by providing an economic incentive to conserve butterfly habitat, the Butterfly project is helping to conserve butterflies along with all the other amazing animal species found in the East Usambara Mountains of Tanzania. Also finalized was the commitment from the Fort Collins Public Library Trust to again provide the \$3,000 challenge to the children and teens to read extra this summer in support of the ARC.

An interesting aspect of the SRP that isn't usually talked about is the way that retail establishments approach us each year, asking to be able to contribute coupons to our SRP participants. This year, an all-time high of nine businesses--Applebee's, Bear Rock Café, Carino's, Country Buffet, Fort Collins Farmers' Market, Golden Corral, McDonald's, Pizza Hut, and Red Robin Gourmet Burgers--will be providing coupons to be given as a bonus to children who earn their second reading prize. An additional 25 businesses that we approach donate or discount regular SRP prizes.

April is also the time of year when the Library Pals program starts taking applications. Library Pals is a summer volunteer program for youth who are finishing fifth through eighth grades. It is very popular with both kids and parents and each year we receive more applicants than we can accommodate. While it is a "volunteer" situation, it is also a "program" that we plan carefully and supervise well. Each year, staff who will be Pal Bosses go through a training that both covers the basic operations, and also reminds us of how to be safe and smart in all interactions with these kids, including sensitive topics such as safe touch and the careful supervision parents expect.

One of the changes that will be evident in this year's SRP programs is the frequent inclusion of craft activities. We know through research that early literacy skills are extended, practiced, and confirmed through sensory activities that are tied to a literacy experience like a storytime.

In fact, in early April, Children's Programming Librarian Jean Gullikson tested this new-to-us concept of including craft experiences in programs by holding a Webkinz Party. Webkinz are plush animals that come with individual codes to enter into the Webkinz website where there are fun elements for the owners to enjoy. The Library's program encouraged school-age children to bring either their favorite Webkinz plush toy or another stuffed animal to drop-in programs at Main and Harmony Library. Games, crafts, and prize drawings were enjoyed by 186 participants at Main on a Saturday morning and 524 at Harmony! Even better, Circulation said plenty of new cards were issued during the hubbub before and after the programs as families new to the Library found this new type of programming appealing.

EMS--The Event Management System and the new meeting room regulations to go along with it advanced another step this month with updated regulations being sent out, set out at Public Desks, and posted on the Library's webpage (<http://fcgov.com/library/info.php#8>). While the updated regulations don't go into effect until June 1, different non-profit groups are responding now to our request to register as users on the new automated system. Meanwhile, the software program is proving very useful for scheduling everything from the computer labs to the small conference room at Main to the display cases and even to the Library's big outdoor tent.

PSD (and other collaborations)--Our partnership with Poudre School District is quietly but surely gathering steam as Lead Librarians Lu Benke and Tova Aragon meet monthly with Marsha Ring, coordinator of PSD School Media Centers. A PSD Media Staff Appreciation Day is being scheduled here at Main Library for this coming August, kicking off the new school year by cementing a close working relationship with PSD staff and sharing valuable ways that they can use the public library's resources. More immediately, we will once again be able to distribute our SRP promotional materials through the schools, putting the Library's summer calendar in the hands of every school-age child. Also, "new" Early Literacy Librarian Vicky Hays went this month to Fort Collins and Poudre High Schools' Teen Parent classes and a Child Development class at Poudre to share information on Every Child Ready to Read. She also went to Salud Clinic to talk with them about Reach Out and Read and, with Lu Benke, met with Bright Beginnings Director Susan Kcmarik to discuss ways to collaborate more.

A successful Volunteer Appreciation Brunch was held Saturday, April 19th, at the Fort Collins Senior Center. Two county commissioners, a City Council member, BOT members, and Library Trust members attended along with over 90 volunteers and staff. Amy Fristoe of Larimer Animal People Partnership was recognized for her 10 years of volunteer programming at the library. She brought her four-legged "Labrarian," along, who sported a reading-themed neck kerchief. "Business Manager Emeritus" Robert Holzfaster was recognized for his 80+ hours of volunteering in the business office following his retirement and his more recent volunteering with Technical Services and the RFID tagging process.

While the need for weeding volunteers has tapered off somewhat, the widespread need for program assistance has been gearing up. Room setup volunteers, volunteers for the upcoming Victorian Festival, Children's Summer Reading Program helpers, and Annie Walk volunteers are some of the requests going out to the community at this time of year.

The weeding in the Juvenile collections in preparation for RFID tagging is virtually complete and we are reaping the benefits of cleaner, more spacious shelves that look inviting to passing customers, especially if we display beautiful books face out in the newly available spaces. Harmony staff in the Children's area have led the way system-wide with creative ideas to get more and more books on display in eye-appealing ways. They have shifted all the display shelving in the regular stacks to be at kids' eye level, created special theme displays that greet customers as they enter the area, and created a new book area off the drum that customers are loving. Staff report that they must continually refill the empty displays (and that's a good thing!). As Main finishes all of its weeding, it is

moving forward as well with more space on the shelves for displays and a new display unit for picture books in the Picture Book area.

AWE Early Literacy Stations-The final acronym is for the new game computers installed at each location. These colorful, child-sized computer stations funded by the Friends of the Library provide a wide array of highly recommended English and Spanish educational games designed to enhance literacy skills in young children.

In the personal news category, Graphics Coordinator Cydney Clink had her first child, a boy named Steven Henry Clink V, on Monday, April 14. Cydney will be on Short Term Disability until around mid-June.

REFERENCE AND ADULT SERVICES

In March, two staff members from adult services attended the Public Library Association Conference in Minneapolis. The conference provided great opportunities to network with and discuss ideas with librarians from around the world. The conference sessions provided opportunities to learn how other libraries are adapting services to the changing times, new services libraries are trying and trends that may be coming in the future. The “Dangerous Ideas” session challenged the audience to give up their preconceptions of what a library is and look at library service in very different ways. Presenters discussed the role of the librarian in the ‘Google” age; how it will evolve; how the online catalogs need to evolve. Attendees learned about guidelines and tools that help create and evaluate effective services.

An overflowing crowd attended the Glade Reservoir Forum on April 7th in the Front Range Community College Student Center. The college and the Society of American Foresters Student Chapter arranged for the forum to be held in the student center. Four students from the Society volunteered to help with set up and greet attendees at the door. Total attendance was 180. Because of the sponsorship from the students, we were able to accommodate 51 more attendees than the Uranium forum and only turned away 16. There was a strong, positive response from the public including a Thumbs Up in the Coloradoan.

“Thumbs up to the Fort Collins Regional Library District and the Colorado State University Center for sponsoring and organizing Monday night’s session on the Glade Reservoir. It was tremendously useful and informative and engaged the intellect or our community! I thought that the format worked very well, and CSU’s center did a fabulous job. Excellent work!
Michael Ryan, Fort Collins”

DVDs of the forum are available at both libraries for checkout.

On April 19th the Main Library hosted the Asian Pacific American Student Services’ “Asian Cultural Carnival”. This year, the carnival was held both inside and outside of the library. Inside, the attendees were treated to food, food demonstrations, crafts and games. Performances by the Taiko drummers, Filipino dancers, Chinese dancers and a Japanese rock band were held on the showmobile in the park. The library also used the opportunity to promote the ‘ReadOn One Book, One Community’ programs coming in the fall. Attendance was 664 up from 189 in 2007.

The Business Librarian and Systems Admin have been hard at work and the new district’s ‘Business and Nonprofit Center’ webpage was launched this month. It is accessible from Adult Services webpage. <http://library.fcgov.com/adult/business/> The page includes links to print and online resources, a blog and quick guides to help small business owners and nonprofits find the resources they need. Also as part of outreach to the business community, the Business librarian hosted the UniverCity Entrepreneurial Committee at the Main Library. The meeting began with a demonstration of our business resources.

SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION

The Fort Collins Regional Library District's very own III System Administrator, Carol Gyger, has been elected into the top leadership positions of the Innovative User's Group! The IUG is an independent and International member organization for customers of the III system (and to us, a.k.a. Dalva or Millennium) and is a key part of us getting the most from our investment in the system. Many of the new services and innovations we enjoy from III are a direct result of our involvement in IUG. The election signifies a three-year commitment for Carol – the first year she will be vice-chair of the organization; the second year chair, and then a year as "past chair." The election to this post is no small feat – all of us at FCRLD know the depth of Carol's skills, integrity, and panache. This vote from her peers in the IUG community indicates that folks from around the globe who really know their III stuff feel the same way!

Carol and Peggy Shaughnessy attended the IUG Conference in late April, and were joined by Circulation Supervisor Lynda Dickson. Carol ended the conference officially as Chair Elect, Peggy appropriately challenged the flaws of a flagship III interface product (called Encore) in her program on accessibility in web design, and Lynda knocked 'em dead and picked up another flock of fans with her presentations and gatherings on circulation issues.

Our RFID project continues to make steady gains, and right on schedule. As of April 20 our hardworking retro-conversion crews (led by Chris Cortez of circulation) have tagged 180,000 library materials with RFID tags! For those with a calculator handy (or a sharp mind for estimating) that's approximately 20,000 items processed each week! At our current rate, the retro-conversion part of the RFID project would wrap up by early July. As well, our massive weeding effort resulted in 60,000 worn or obsolete items cleared from the shelves, making way for fresh, vital materials. Next for the RFID project is building staff stations and self-checkout machines – both efforts are scheduled to begin in early May.

After many months of talks (both with the vendor and City legal) Carson has completed a contract with OCLC to purchase a web server product called ContentDm for the local history on-line electronic archive. The site (at <http://history.fcgov.com>) was launched many years ago through the leadership of former library staffer Rheba Massey, the technical skills of Peggy Shaughnessy, and a slew of talented volunteers. The basic technologies the site was built on began showing their age about four years ago, creating severe technical limitations and preventing the addition of new material to the site. The Content DM package will allow the electronic archive to grow again using a much more flexible set of technology tools. With new technology comes a new vision for not only the site, but for our history partnership with the Fort Collins Museum. Watch this space for exciting details as they unfold over the next few months!

Our training effort, led by Pamm Clements, has made significant gains lately. Class attendance continues to be high – 300 patrons have availed themselves to classes so far this year, and we are only half-way through the spring "semester!" Most classes are at full capacity (9 students per class at Main and 20 students per class at Harmony). To fight issues we've had in the past with no-shows, SA worked with lab monitors (and their supervisor, Lynda Dickson) to call students with a reminder a day or two prior to their scheduled classes – the numbers show the effort is showing results!

Our classes make a difference for folks in our community. Pamm reports that some patrons are referred our way by the Larimer Workforce center, some are returning to work, others are seeking different jobs due to layoffs, and some need to increase computer skills for workforce demands. One attendee who had completed the library's basic MS Word and Excel classes last year told Pamm that even for lower-paying jobs employers are increasingly requiring candidates to have some experience with MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher. The student said that undertaking these

classes had helped her get her current job and now she's back to learn even more basic computer application skills!

Our website continues to grow as we experiment with new services and technologies in advanced of an anticipated major overhaul next year. A peek of the sorts of things to come can be found on the new business and non-profit page at <http://library.fcgov.com/adult/business/> which incorporates dynamic content, a link to business librarian Anne MacDonald's blog, handy resources that are easy to find, and a new style of organizing the information on the page. Anne was instrumental in requesting a new approach to her page just as web developer Peggy Shaughnessy completed work a new back-end technology that gives library staff more control over their web communications. Look for a similar approach soon for our teen web pages! As well, our web team worked closely with administration to continue refining web communications, including a new page for library Executive Director Brenda Carns.

Desktop and network support staff (Ling Zhao and Chris Bauman) have completed some welcome upgrades for library staff – we now all have Microsoft Office 2003 as our common office application, and many computers received RAM upgrades to squeeze a little more life out of our staff desktop computers. Next up are new public computers and RAM upgrades for the Harmony library!

Although the Fort Collins Regional Library District is blessed with robust and scalable bandwidth, this is not the case for libraries throughout much of the country, which are struggling to meet the electronic needs of patrons. The American Library Association's Office of Information Technology Policy has invited Carson to a meeting in Chicago in May to help create policy recommendations to fight what they're calling a bandwidth crisis facing the nation's libraries. It's a small gathering with some of the top library technologists in the country – Carson is honored and quite humbled by the invitation, and (if they don't send him riding out on a rail early on) is greatly looking forward to what should be a very dynamic atmosphere. More background on the issue is on the web at http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/oitp/papersa/public_version_final.pdf

HARMONY LIBRARY

Teen Programming and Services

Teen Poetry Slam: To help celebrate National Library Week and National Poetry Month, the IRS teens hosted “**Slammin’ @ Your Library: Teen Poetry Slam**” on April 19 from 1-3 p.m. at the Harmony Library. Thirteen teen poets signed up for the competition, with grand prizes of \$50, \$30, \$20 gift cards to Barnes & Noble, and \$25 gift card to Cinemark. Each participant received a prize of a journal and pen. There were 52 people in attendance, and a good time was had by all. Megan Ryssman from the IRS was the MC and did an impressive job, as did the IRS teens who served as scorekeepers, timekeeper, and judges. The poets represented were fabulous!

Teen Read-A-Thon – Main Library

The IRS group sponsored its first Teen Read-A-Thon to celebrate National Teen Literature Day on April 17th, 2008. 21 teens participated and raised \$600 for books and equipment for the Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County.

Teen Literature Conference: Sue-Ellen and Diane took nine Interesting Reader Society (IRS) members to the annual Teen Literature Conference on April 5 at the Tivoli Student Union in Denver. The teens attended a variety of programs dealing with libraries and literature, and enjoyed presentations and panel discussions with YA authors Gail Giles and Alane Furguson. At the end of the day, the IRS teens were excitedly talking about going again next year. Thanks to the Friends of the Library for funding this very successful trip.

Collections

The annual YALSA (Young Adult Teens' Top Ten nomination list of 26 titles, which teens nationwide use for an online teen vote for the "top ten" teen books of the year during Teen Read Week, was released April 17. We are planning to promote this national project at our library, and additional copies of the titles as needed were ordered for our collections.

Web Page

Diane and Sue-Ellen, in conjunction with Carson and Peggy, are discussing the prototype of the new Teen Lounge library web page and how they hope it will function. Anne MacDonald offered helpful advice about web page functions based on her business web page.

Based on ideas from the teens in our IRS advisory group we are reviewing recommendations to improve the Harmony teen space.