

Kurtz retires after long Sisters Library career

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

Linda Kurtz, Sisters Library Public Service Specialist (PSS), is retiring on October 31. Many Sisters residents are going to miss her quiet, competent presence behind the desk and among the stacks.

The public is invited to come officially say farewell and thanks to Linda on Thursday, October 29, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the library. There will be light refreshments served and Linda will be there to say goodbye and receive well-wishes from the many who have come to rely on her assistance and friendship.

When Kurtz announced her retirement plans last June, she thought she'd be able to "just fold up my tent and slip out the back door." But those who know and love her immediately began asking supervisor Zoe Schumacher what was being planned as a send-off for this long-time employee, whom Schumacher described as a cherished member of the community.

The Bend native "always considered the library my

second home" when it was housed in what is now the Deschutes Public Library System (DPLS) administrative building in downtown Bend.

Kurtz, who learned and honed her skills on the job, began in the 1970s as the librarian in the Maida Bailey Building, when it was located on Cascade Avenue next to the current Depot Café. At that time she worked about 20 hours a week. The library was a joint endeavor of the City and County, with Sisters providing the space and the County paying her salary and providing materials.

Like today, the library was a popular spot with locals, run by a very hands-on board.

Kurtz provided story time and summer reading programs, familiar to today's families. Peg Bermel was named to replace her when she left that post.

She worked for a period of time for Central Oregon Community College in community education in Sisters while raising her children. After the DPLS became a special taxing district in the late 1990s, she joined the circulation department in

the downtown Bend branch. Fifteen years ago, Kurtz came back to where it all started, albeit in a different building (the current Chamber of Commerce) to assume duties of a PSS.

She cites a number of reasons why she has loved her library work.

"I don't think I've ever experienced reluctance about coming to work. I know if I have questions or a concern about things going on in my life, that I will find support and connection here with my co-workers. I feel very fortunate to be part of this team.

"I'm going to miss the people the most — my co-workers and customers. I enjoy connection with the community — the opportunity to engage with people of all ages."

Kurtz's passion about libraries is evident when she talks about her work.

"I am idealistic about libraries and the function they serve. Libraries are a level playing field, regardless of a person's circumstances. They are cornerstones of free society — essential."

The attention that her retirement is focusing on her

is uncomfortable because she doesn't want to be singled out. She sees herself as part of a "really strong team" and the accomplishments of the library have been the result of teamwork.

Schumacher describes Kurtz as "a quiet leader whose voice and presence grounds the team." She went on to talk about Kurtz's unique sense of humor. Zoe acknowledged Linda's passion about library services and her compassion for other people.

Kurtz's husband was a teacher in the Sisters School District for years prior to his death in 2004. They raised two sons who now live in Maupin and Portland, and Linda has one granddaughter. She looks forward to spending more time with her family, including her mother who lives in Bend. Her husband's death presented Kurtz with an unplanned time to start over.

She says now her retirement is a "new beginning by choice," and she looks forward to figuring it all out.

She has no immediate plans and looks at the coming months as "a breathing space for my transition." She



PHOTO BY SUE STAFFORD

Linda Kurtz has been a fixture of Sisters Library.

indicated she may well eventually volunteer at the library and other local organizations.

"I believe in libraries. I believe in community. It's been an honor to do this work," Kurtz said in summarizing her years at the library.

Black Butte Ranch resident Denise Mariman will fill the vacancy left by Linda's retirement. Mariman was a long-time Sisters Library volunteer, and then served as an on-call backup for staff, before becoming a PSS at the East Bend branch. As of November 3, her commute to work will be much shorter.

Serving the Sisters, Camp Sherman and Black Butte Ranch Areas

Ponderosa Properties LLC

REALTORS AND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

541-549-2002

1-800-650-6766

www.PonderosaProperties.com

221 S. Ash St., Sisters

*The Locals' Choice
for Real Estate
Sales*



Kevin R. Dyer
541-480-7552
CRS, GRI,
Principal Broker



Rad Dyer
541-480-8853
ABR, CCIM, CRB, CRS, GRI,
Principal Broker



Carol Davis
541-410-1556
A/R, GRI, Broker



Catherine Black
541-88-9219
CRS, Broker



Ali Mayez
541-480-9658
Broker, GRI, Green



Shane Lundgren
541-588-9223
Broker



Debbie Dyer
541-480-1650
GRI, Broker



Carrie Koepke
541-419-1575
Broker

