

Library buys Spanish materials

By Lisa Millegan
Emerald Associate Editor

The Eugene Public Library has purchased more Spanish language books, newspapers, magazines, audio and video cassettes thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Although the library had a Spanish language collection in the past, the collection was limited largely to classic literature and lacked "the popular fiction and nonfiction that most people would want to read," said Sandra Carrick, senior librarian and project director of the grant.

Library officials decided to apply for the grant to expand the Spanish language collection after requests for materials steadily increased.

"We wanted to promote cultural diversity in the area," Carrick said. "Hispanics are one of the fastest growing minorities in the community."

According to the 1990 census, 3,051 Hispanics live in Eugene, making up 2 percent of the city's total population.

However, Vicki Valdez of the Chicano Affairs Center estimat-

ed that the number of Hispanics living in the area is closer to 10,000. She said the census count is inaccurate because census takers did not have an adequate amount of time to make the count and missed many recent immigrants.

Carrick said the library worked closely with local Latino associations to decide what Spanish language materials to order.

"Once the word gets out, I think the Spanish materials will be heavily, heavily used," Valdez said. "It's hard if you're living in a place and you can't understand the language. Then you see something in your own language and it's like seeing a friend."

The library inaugurated its new Spanish language collection Saturday with an open house that included performances of songs and stories in the language.

Close to 100 people crammed into an upstairs room of the library to watch children from Eugene's Spanish immersion Buena Vista Elementary School perform a play. Nicaraguan singer Ana Bondurant also led

the group in a rousing chorus of "Feliz Navidad."

Barbara Stevens-Newcomb told two stories in both Spanish and English — one about a little boy who wanted to fly and the other, a Mexican folktale, titled "The day it snowed tortillas."

Geoff Hickox wrapped up the show with slides of a trip he took to Nicaragua.

During intermission, audience members feasted on nachos and were invited to take a free rose.

A table in the room was decorated with flags from South American countries and a globe and atlas that prominently displayed depictions of the continent. Colorful posters of Mexico and Chile adorned the walls.

While many members of the audience were parents or friends of the children who performed, several were bussed from Eugene's Whiteaker district where a large Hispanic community exists.

The library will host three other Spanish language programs in the next year. Each will coincide with the arrival of new materials, Carrick said.

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member who I was," Roberts said. "We spent a lot of time together, and she didn't even remember me."

But senior volunteer Trina McCartney said many of the residents have Alzheimer's disease, so she is happy when someone remembers her. She said a couple of the residents ask where she was if she misses a week.

"If I go there and talk with them and get them to smile, then I've done something good," McCartney said.

McCartney said that besides visiting with the residents, she has a pet therapy program, in which she brings puppies or kittens, borrowed from Greenhill Humane Society, to the residents.

McCartney recommends volunteering for people who enjoy one-on-one conversations and getting to know other people.

"You just have to remember that when you go there, you're really touching someone's life."

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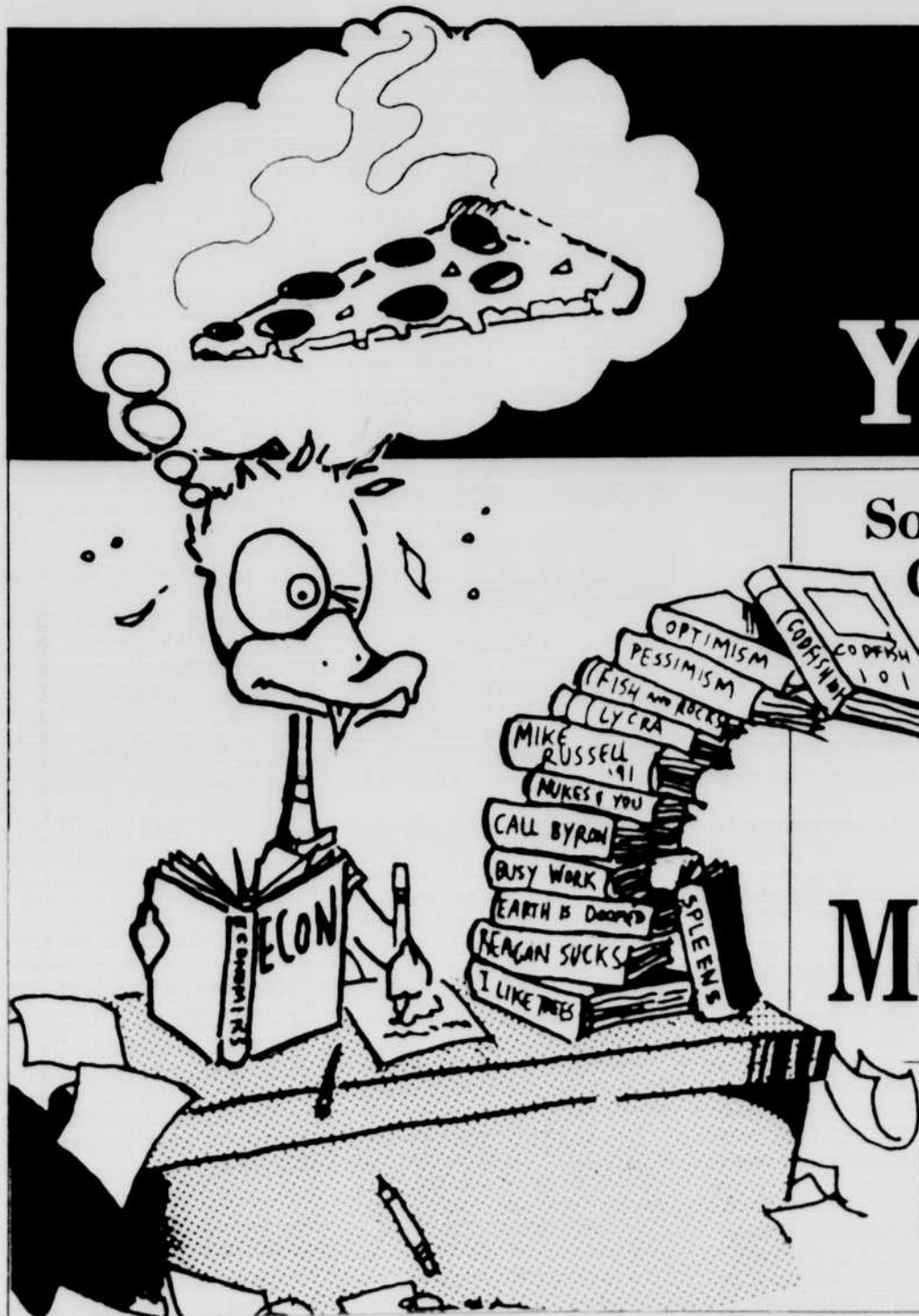


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