

Between the Bookends

By Nancy Burch, Librarian
Vernonia Public Library



A column written by David Sarasohn in the March 7, 2010, *Sunday Oregonian* discusses the striking increases in library use (in this case—Multnomah County Library) during these economically trying times. In his column "Reading a Recession", Sarasohn makes particular mention of the range of library services including circulation of written and electronic materials, availability of Internet access (especially for preparing

resumés and making job applications), and the encouragement of early literacy, and says that libraries are no longer "Sshhh" institutions.

Statistics collected by the Oregon State Library show that library use is at an all-time high. A news release from State Librarian Jim Scheppke, states that the number of books and other library materials checked out from public libraries was up seven percent from the prior year, with fifty-three of the 130 public libraries in the state reporting double-digit increases in check-outs. Scheppke says, "Oregon public libraries have really stepped up to be 'first responders' in this time of need for many Oregonians."

Observations by staff as well as collected statistical data show that use in our library reflects this correlation between library services and the economy. Our circulation for the past two years has averaged an increase of 15.7% over the two previous years, with circulation for the last twelve months at 27,697, which means that an average of 92 items are checked out each day the library is open. Periodicals, especially the daily *Oregonian*, are in constant demand as residents have cut back or discontinued these items from their personal expenses. All six of the Internet computers are usually in use. As with Multnomah County, many of our patrons (an average of 30 per day) are using the computers to write resumés, search job sites and send job applications. If anyone is interested in these statistics which are collected yearly by the State Library, the website is Oregon.gov.OSL/. Under department, choose Library Development Services & Public Library Statistics. You will find all public libraries in Oregon and be able to evaluate and compare statistics.

Even though our library is very different from the Multnomah County Library in size, budget, and uniqueness of the desires of the patrons it serves, our goals are the same—to provide the best possible service to the citizens of our communities. In our case, this means offering a variety of programs and materials for youngsters and adults as well as the invaluable computers with Internet

access. The weekly preschool program and the summer reading program have been in existence for at least 25 years in our local library, and the after school story/activity hour has been a reality for close to 10 years. Movies for adults and for families have been shown regularly for the past several years, a book discussion group meets monthly, and special presentations (through the Oregon Council for Humanities) have taken place on a regular basis.

Special upcoming events to take place in the library reflect the individuality of our community. Book discussion group will meet Monday, March 22 at 5:30 to discuss *Pilgrims*, a book of short stories by Elizabeth Gilbert. Movie matinees will be shown during Spring Break on Tuesday, March 23 (*Bedtime Stories*) and Thursday, March 25 (*Where the Wild Things Are*) at 2:00 p.m. On Saturday evening, March 27 at 6:30, the movie *New Moon* will be shown. Tuesday, April 6th at 7:00 p.m. will be the first of the new Conversation Projects offered by the Oregon Humanities. **Life in a Mega City: Images of Urban Bangladesh** will be presented by photojournalist and Fulbright Scholar Geoffrey Hiller. Through slides, videos and stories, Hiller will lead a conversation about the challenges associated with the growth of mega cities and the differences between Bangladeshi and American cultures. During the week of April 11-17 (National Library Week) special events such as guessing and coloring contests will also be taking place. Featured during this week, on Thursday, April 15 at 6:45, will be a favorite of the community—**B.J. the Clown**. This event will be sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

New DVD acquisitions to look for this month include *House Rules* by Jodi Picoult, *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky* by Heidi W. Durrow, *A Night Too Dark* by Dana Stabenow, *Second Hand Lions* starring Michael Caine and Robert Duvall, *The Bucket List* starring Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, and *Julie and Julia* starring Meryl Streep and Amy Adams. I would also like to bring to your attention another new acquisition, *Calamity: The Heppner Flood of 1903* by Joann Green Byrd. This carefully documented, poignant story includes a moving collection of photographs describing a flash flood that claimed the lives of 238 men, women and children in little more than an hour. This calamity also caused the loss of 141 homes, 40 businesses, and hundreds of animals, while poisoning the drinking water of two other communities. The consequences of our two floods, (as catastrophic as they were to us) pale in relationship to the devastation that took place on June, 14, 1903, in this small farm town in northeastern Oregon.

Remember, this is your library—reflecting your individuality. If you have suggestions for materials or services, make them known and we will try to be of assistance. In Multnomah County Library there is a sign reading, "A City with a great library is a great city." Our expectation is to make sure that this statement is also true of Vernonia and our library.

Miller now OPI Care Manager

Karen Miller of Community Action Team (CAT) is now serving Vernonia senior citizens who are 60 and over as Oregon Project Independence (OPI) Care Manager. Miller had been serving as Senior Center Advocate for CAT working out of the Vernonia Senior Center until earlier this year, when that program experienced funding cuts.

The OPI program, funded through CAT, helps older adults stay in their home by offering services such as;

- home care
- chore services
- shopping
- personal services
- meal preparation
- care management
- respite for caregivers

Call Miller at 503-429-0273 for more information on available services based upon funding through the Oregon State Legislature.

Financial help at workshops

Were you one of the millions of Americans who made it their new year's resolution to get your finances in order? Well, April is financial literacy month, and a great time to start evaluating your family's budget. To help you get started, the Columbia County Extension FCH and 4-H Programs are hosting a Family Finance Workshop Series. We invite you to attend all four sessions in April.

A different element of family finance will be presented each Wednesday in April, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., as follows:

- April 7th – Family Budgeting
- April 14th – Understanding and Protecting your Credit
- April 21st – Saving for Family Goals
- April 28th – Investing for Retirement

All sessions will be held at the OSU Extension Service Office in St. Helens. Cost of the series of classes is \$20.00. But, if you invest the time and attend all four sessions, we'll give you your money back!

For more information and to sign up, call or visit the OSU Extension Service office at 505 N. Columbia River Highway, St. Helens, OR 97051, 503-397-3462.

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Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Tues., Thur. 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 Sat. 10 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Preschool Story Time: Mondays, 10:30 a.m. when school is in session.
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