Yaki-talk

Apple Valley Update

The Apple Valley Library Board met Tuesday, July 29, at 8:00 a.m. at the Summitview Library. Board member Jane Twaddle reported on estimates to bring the enclosed picnic shelter on the Grange property up to code to use it for a library.

Above ground the building is structurally sound, but would need to be wired for electricity. Jane saw the rewiring as manageable, but was more concerned about the concrete slab it is built on. It does not have the footings required by code, and excavating to retrofit it with the proper footings would be expensive. There is also the possibility that the slab or the structure would be damaged in the retrofit.

Jane will tell the Washington State Grange Master that the group is still interested in the picnic shelter as a possible site for the library, but that they don't have enough information yet for a formal proposal.

The Grange Commission is supposed to decide about the disposition of the Apple Valley property at their August 9th meeting. If their decision is to sell, there isn't any point in pursuing putting a library there. If they decide to hold onto the property, Librarian Florence O'Brien suggested that the board pay for an inspection to determine whether it is feasible to pursue putting a library there.

The scarcity of possible sites in the West Valley area, and estimates for upgrading the shelter, do not look encouraging. The Apple Valley Board will decide their next step after the Grange's decision.

Thank You For Your Support!

Thank you to all the city officials, board members, and community members who wrote letters of support for the grant request for a new automated circulation system. Your letters helped make a very strong case for an award to the Yakima Valley Regional Library System.

Internet Goes Rural

Reference Coordinator Cynthia Garrick used the Internet itself to find out how it has affected libraries in rural areas. She posted a list of questions on STUMPERS, a listserv that is read by reference librarians around the country. Librarians who serve rural areas e-mailed her their responses and suggestions.

We are printing several of the responses in this newsletter (and the next). If anyone is interested in more details, including the e-mail addresses for people and listservs mentioned, please contact Cynthia for the full text.

Summer Wild With Books

Children are "Going wild with books" in this summer's reading program, according to Children's Coordinator Karen Spence. "Registration is running high throughout the system, perhaps because kids like the animal theme, the intriguing bookmarks, or Barbara Toop's inviting artwork," Spence said.

This summer's program was designed to be simple for staff, and to keep the focus on the fun of reading. The bookmarks and bookbags the children receive are just a way of charting their progress through the summer, rather than the goal.

When the program winds up in August, community librarians will be surveyed about their results. Karen will compile an evaluation of the program, and a summary of special activities that various libraries tried this summer, and send every librarian a copy.

Overdues are coming back in stacks, and we are not too cranky answering the phone calls and questions about them. Next, a rather long tracer list to find any books that slipped through the system and back onto the shelf.

Bye-Bye Books-By-Mail

The Books-by-Mail service has been providing mail-order catalog services since the bookmobile was retired in 1980.

In April, 1997, Booksource Books-By-Mail, from whom the Regional Library System purchases books and catalogs, announced that it will discontinue its service in July, 1997.

After visiting North Central Regional Library's Books-By-Mail program in Wenatchee, plotting Books-By-Mail customers on a county map, computing current costs, conducting a survey of Books-By-Mail customers who used the service during May, and looking for a replacement vendor, we learned that

-The annual cost of $57,700 is three times as much per item circulated as the rest of the Regional Library System;

-About 125 people use Books-By-Mail regularly and another 25 people use it occasionally every month;

-Starting our own Books-By-Mail service will require at least one more employee;

-Less than ten Books-By-Mail customers are homebound;

-Books-By-Mail customers also use community libraries: 29%--Yakima Library, 20%--Summitview Library, 13%--Sunnyside Library, 10%--Selah Library, 6%--Toppenish Library, 6%--Wapato Library, 1-3%--Union Gap, Moxee, Gleed, Granger, Naches, Tieton, Harrah and Zillah Libraries; and

-There are no other commercial books-by-mail vendors.

Books-By-Mail customers can continue to request books to be mailed through Reserves.

Eliminating Books-By-Mail will not result in a reduction-in-force for library employees.

So, with great regret, the Regional Library's Board of Trustees, at their meeting on July 24, 1997, approved the termination of Books-By-Mail service, effective December 31, 1997.

Anne E. Haley

Library	JUNE Circulation
Buena	524
Gleed	334
Granger	534
Harrah	353
Mabton	1,167
Moxee	1,719
Naches	620
Nile	299
Selah	5,108
Southeast	74
Summitview	19,703
Sunnyside	7,762
Terrace Hts	970
Tieton	534
Toppenish	3,349
Union Gap	1,869
Wapato	2,106
White Swan	793
Zillah	990
C. L. Sub-total	48,808
Headquarters	25,548
Books-By-mail	525
Outreach	2,057
Total:	77,038

Library	Reference	Program Attend.
Buena	0	
Gleed	21	
Granger	26	
Harrah	0	
Mabton	69	
Moxee	187	125
Naches	10	
Nile	0	
Selah	205	183
Southeast	0	
Summitview	219	451
Sunnyside	115	154
Terrace Hts	78	277
Tieton	7	
Toppenish	55	236
Union Gap	105	
Wapato	105	417
White Swan	8	
Zillah	6	
CL Sub-total	1,216	CL: 1,843
HQ Ref.	2,415	HQJ: 191
HQ JRef.	2,558	HQY: 61
Total:	6,189	HQA: 28
		2,123

2

Internet Questions:

I'm not sure STUMPERS is the right place to post this but since this is a diverse group with lots of Internet experience, I'll go ahead and ask. We just received a grant to put Internet terminals in all 20 libraries in the Yakima Valley Regional Library System. Some of these libraries are located in small, rural locations and the staff at these libraries have many questions and concerns. They are interested in the experience of others when Internet is introduced into rural areas. These are their questions:

Do library walk-ins increase?

Are library services perceived as more/less relevant?

Do patrons' requests for more traditional library services increase/decrease i.e. periodicals, reader's advisory?

What is the patron learning curve time line?

Can traditional library services effectively compete with the Internet for limited library resources?

Large questions to answer but your experience and advice would be appreciated. Also, any suggestions on other listservs that would be helpful?

Thank you,

Cynthia Garrick, Yakima Valley Regional Library

Answers from rural libraries:

Cynthia,

Perhaps some of our experiences would relate to your libraries. I am at a branch library in a community of 1300. This is a low income area with no major industry within 25 miles. Our library first got internet access in January '96, and public access April '97.

The first thing that happened when we got access was that our ability to answer reference questions increased a hundred- fold. Any reference librarian can appreciate the internet, but, for small libraries it is a real godsend. Public access has added a new dimension of service to patrons. We do now have people coming in who we never saw before. They come in to check e-mail (not thru us, hotmail) or just to browse. There are people looking for medical information, and information from people with similar interests (horses, bird watching).

As far as affecting our traditional services: If anything there has been a slight increase in library usage. People who come in to use the net then sometimes decide to look for a book while they are here. Or by coming in they find that we offer things that they never would have expected from us. Overall, I would have to say it has been a positive experience for us so far.

....Sincerestly, DAN (Title varies) Osceola Mills Public Library, PA

- -

Cynthia,

The libraries in the state of Georgia are all going Internet through PEACHNET -- the university system's network. We are doing this through monies earmarked from our state lottery. Many, indeed most, of our libraries are rural if you don't count Atlanta and environs. I'll give you some of my observations but a suggestion is to post your question to our Georgia public library list serve....

This whole Internet in a rural library is a good news bad news sort of affair. On my good days I will tell you how wonderful it is. On my bad days I will tell you how much a pain in the nether regions it is. But it boils down to several points. We are strapped for cash. We can't afford to buy the materials we need and want, for popular reading or for reference. The internet has proven to assist us in finding alternate reference sources so that has aided the smaller libraries in obtaining information. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the process of weeding through all the trash is incredibly time consuming and with my poorly trained staff in the smaller more remote libraries, very difficult because they often don't know what is trash and what isn't, and they seem to believe that it is faster no matter what you tell them. AND -- the general population believes that if it is on the Internet, why, it must be correct, and information from books can't be as up to date or as accurate, etc. as the Internet -- so if you have it, you have to use it.

We do have our PEACHNET and GALILEO (GA

Library Learning Online) which is what I insist the staff use primarily, but if you don't have reliable research databases, you will run into those problems. Through the Public Library Services and the whole process of acquiring our Internet over the previous years the Division of Public Library Services (State) has arranged for training in Internet use and searching so this has helped. Training is the key!! I continually have little seminars and training sessions where the staff reviews and shares new sites they have located. I regularly send notices of new sites that I have found through Library Journal or my own searching.

As to how our staff have taken to it -- well, I had one Branch Manager in one of my small libraries quit (after 20 years) because she didn't want to work in a library if she had to use a computer. I also had one of my Branch Managers (same age) go and talk to her state legislator to make sure her library was one of the first who got it installed. So, go figure.

The absolute worst problem is maintenance of the equipment and software --upgrades, cleaning up the downloaded files, and cleaning up behind those hackers -- and they come out of the woodwork!!! I have found that since the Internet was installed in my rural library system I have to spend at least one day a week purely on maintenance, repair and cleanup. I have a Technical Services Librarian who also works doing this and between us we spend at least eight to ten hours a week (six libraries).

People who have never set foot in a library come in to use the Internet. Very, very strange people come in to use the Internet. Most of them don't check out anything else -- about one in ten will become a reader also. Other libraries have different experiences.

State-wide it has cost us. The quote (not exact because I don't exactly remember, but it is close) from our current governor is, "They have the Internet, they don't need more books or new buildings....." But, this, too, shall pass and I believe that it will balance out after all the brouhaha is over.

I don't think we could go on without it because many of our regular patrons now do both and I think that generally, the good outweighs the bad. But, you've caught me on a good day, too. Write back with more questions if you need to -- good luck.

Dusty Gres, Director, Ohoopee Regional Library System, GA

- -

- -

Cynthia --

I am speaking for a library in a community of 2800 (6000 in the county) with a 6-month history of offering public Internet access.

Walk-ins have increased. Patrons who had not been in the library in years as well as those who had not previously used library services have appeared. We ask patrons to sign an Internet agreement as well as a time sheet to record use of the computer. This number grows daily.

Patron requests for traditional services have not decreased, but have increased. We are asked more reference questions, check out more books, see more patrons. Since the Internet became available, we have seen patron count increase as well as circulation. Another difficult to measure factor has been the goodwill generated by being able to provide answers to questions we would have been unable to address locally before. An unsolicited comment by a business patron at a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting complimented the library staff and our ability to provide information from Internet sources.

Patrons have a very rapid learning curve which can be enhanced through introductory classes, bookmarks on the browser for patron use, a homepage that gives a little assistance to those who are only "surfing", and a staff that is willing to answer questions.

The last question implies a funding issue. We have been fortunate, like your area, to have had assistance with placement of the computer, but the access charges for telephone line and Internet provider are a monthly commitment. We will purchase less reference material, perhaps other non-fiction as well, especially if current publication is an issue. Planning for future demand is difficult, but we see the possibility of needing several computers (we do not yet have an automated catalog).

If you would like copies of Internet guidelines, our microcomputer policy, etc., we would gladly reply.

Carolyn Little, Phillipsburg City Library, Phillipsburg, KS

Look for more responses in the next newsletter...