

YAKI-TALK

ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS

*By and for YVRL Staff & Boards
December 1998; Vol. 2, Issue 3*

Videos by Request

When we go live on Polaris, all customers around the county will be able to search for the titles or stars they want on the computer, place reserves, and pick the video up at their local library. When not out filling requests, the videos will be on display at the Sunnyside, Summitview and Yakima libraries.

Videos will not be immediately shelved in all other community libraries due to concerns about space. (Heck, we are having a hard time getting the computers into libraries.) We will wait to set up a video collection in most community libraries until the collection has grown and libraries have adjusted to their new computers and made space for a video collection.

If customers complain that you don't have videos on your shelf, pass that concern on to Anne. Community demand will help guide who gets video collections next.

**Come to the
General Staff Meeting
on Dec. 18 for good food,
service awards, and input
on our marketing plan!**

"As the Staff Changes..."

Since our last episode: Andrea Whitehurst started as a library assistant at the Union Gap Library (has it really been that long since we had a newsletter?). Rachel Leslie was hired for the half-time position in Children's (after Carol went to Summitview). Jacob Warren returned to take the computer trainer position in Reference after having worked part-time there during school.

Anita Humphrey is the new weekend library aide at Summitview, while Susan Spain is their new weekday page. ("New" is a relative term, since both Anita and Susan have worked there before.)

Karen Hunsiker left Community Services to travel around the U.S. with her son visiting from Switzerland. Rachel Gordon became the Library Assistant II and we stole Cilla Pierce from Circ. to take over the home service position. In Circ., Shauna Hay came back to work Cilla's evening position. Circ. also has Ryan, Joshua, Liz and Jonathan as new pages.

After a extensive search, Ian Fairclough was hired as manager of Technical Services, a combination of Cataloging and Acquisitions. Ian

Q: When are you going to start charging for overdue?

A: We will start charging for overdue one month after we start checking out materials on Polaris. Currently we are predicting that overdue will start March 15, 1999, if Polaris is ready to start on Feb. 9.

Q: How is the Polaris circulation system coming along?

A: The time it takes Polaris to update a record for a new book has improved from four minutes, to three, to under a minute. Ian Fairclough, Technical Services Manager, said "This is still too long, but tolerable. The Polaris staff have been responsive to our concerns."

We are glad we didn't immediately drop our old forms of check-out and switch to Polaris when originally scheduled, since they are still working out some bugs. Washington County (Oregon) Library System did switch immediately, and Mary Lou's informant there expressed extreme frustration when it was taking about three minutes to charge a book. (We haven't heard lately, but we assume that they have seen the same increase in speed that our Tech Services has.)

Cynthia and Mary Lou are collecting and passing on suggestions for improvements to the OPAC. Cynthia is pushing strenuously to have the screen displays simplified, since many of our customers are not familiar with computers.

...and Changes..."

comes to us from Liverpool, England, by way of New York and Laramie, among other places.

In Reserves, Janelle delivered baby Max and is back to work. Esther also has come back after nursing her husband during his recuperation from cancer surgery. Dennis Hunt is now responsible for putting together the display windows at the Yakima library.

In Sunnyside, Corrina Guerra left and Alicia Capetillo started as the 14 hr/wk assistant, but then Alicia left last week and the position is open again. Martha Conradt resigned from Mabton Library to work full-time, and the assistant's position is open. The newly-created assistant's position at Southeast Library is also open.

Note: The 1999 budget includes opening all libraries a minimum of 20 hours a week. This means big changes coming for the librarians at Buena, Harrah, Naches, Nile, Terrace Heights and Tieton. The public will get increased access to their libraries, and the librarians will get vacation and sick leave, and the option of health care coverage.

What's Up At: Selah Library

By: Clara Eustis

After six months of offering free internet access to the public at the Selah Library I thought it would be a good time to sit back and reflect on all the changes -- good and bad -- these electronic boxes have wrought. Although our circulation has remained about the same we are definitely a busier library. New customers, attracted by the internet service, are coming into the library for the first time. Old customers are struggling to keep up with the changes. Staff duties have become more challenging as we juggle our roles as librarian, reader's advisor, teacher, technician, cashier, referee and janitor.

Many of the new customers who have appeared at the library are not readers. They have very little or no knowledge of library operation, library etiquette or library customer responsibility. Children and adults must be verbally instructed in library rules. Some are under the impression we are operating an "internet cafe" where they can plop down in front of the computer with their latte and muffin. Children, filled with natural exuberance, pour into the library after school and we have our hands full containing noise, supervising the internet sign-up sheet, stopping the horseplay and teaching basic computer operation. Contrary to popular belief, we have found that most of the children who use the internet have limited computer skills. They have mastered the mouse and can use a scroll bar but they do not read the screen, will impatiently click the mouse until everything locks up and do not know how to use a search engine.

The atmosphere of the library has changed. It is no longer a silent, uncrowded sanctuary where serious readers browse the shelves, children quietly put together puzzles, or thumb through picture books and the staff has plenty of time to keep the collection in order. It takes all our interpersonal skills to maintain order, politely teach library etiquette and assure our "book lovers" we are only trying to improve the library service they enjoy. Plus materials still have to be checked in and out, books have to be shelved, shipments emptied and most of us are still bar-coding. (I don't know about you, but I'm tired when I get home from work.)

Shirley and I have found a sense of humor to be most important in maintaining order and our sanity. If you can keep a smile on your face, customers young and old are more likely to cooperate with your efforts to make the library a pleasant place for everyone. Consistency in implementing library rules and procedures is also very important. You may think children are not listening, but tell them something different today than you did yesterday they will call you on it in a second. We also try not to hold grudges. Everybody has a bad day and just because you're a pill on Monday it doesn't mean you can't start fresh on Tuesday (unless you've gone beyond pill--then maybe you can start fresh on Wednesday or Thursday).

I know some libraries are dealing with a more intimidating group of customers than we are in Selah. It is hard to keep a sense of humor and be forgiving when you are dealing with people who disrespect you and the library. This is an issue that will have to be addressed by staff and administration.

Sad though it may be, I think we all have to resign ourselves to the fact that our "old" libraries are gone. Unless the Y2K bug shuts everything down on January 1, 2000, and our ability to use the index to the encyclopedia becomes valuable again, we have to learn some new skills. Computer skills are important but we also need training in management, marketing, interpersonal relationships, safety and maybe even survival.

Newsletter Contributions

Your co-workers and board members would love to hear "What's Up" in your library or department. Send your news, questions, or opinions to Yaki-Talk (all the news that fits)

Community Services, 102 N. 3rd St.,

Yakima WA 98901 (509) 452-8541

(or e-mail to aravenholt@yvrls.lib.wa.us).

And if you don't send in a contribution, one of the new

Editorial Board members (Karen Spence, Linda

McCracken, Clara Eustis, or Amy Ravenholt)

may come and twist your arm....

YAKI-TALK (It's been busy, but we're back!)
Yakima Valley Regional Library
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