

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

January 2004

“So where do you go to find a researcher who is intelligent, imaginative, skilled in the use of computers, devoted to discovering the truth, and knowledgeable about science, technology, history, and literature, and who usually works for dirt and gets credit for nothing? After lunch I drove to the city library on Main and asked the reference librarian to find what she could on Junior Crudup.”

from Last Car to Elysian Fields

by

James

Lee

Burke

The year is only just begun and already it overflows with projects, plans, dreams and the myriad elements that define the works and days of the library. However, a reality check, not always welcome, does confer vital perspective: Snow slows! It seemed prudent to close at 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Monday. Weather predictions were dire and as I monitored other public and private closures concluded that the safety of staff and patrons outweighed inconvenience.

In addition to the Fairhaven Centennial celebration, not to mention the City's Centennial, five major goals dominate the year's calendar:

1. Weeding and storage – we are overflowing, there is literally no room on the shelves. The librarians are wrestling with this issue and hope to resolve within the first quarter. Linda Hodge is leading this effort.
2. Telecommunications – we are not only experiencing phone problems again, we must also complete site preparation for the system migration. Two years ago the City had hoped to install a new or upgraded phone system. Budget constraints scuttled that proposal. The new ITSD Director, Marty Mulholland, has offered to work with a small library committee to “tweak” our existing system. (She has been very successful in solving problems in two other departments.) Pending the results of that exercise, we will then reprogram all of our phone messages. I anticipate that this project will be finished by the end of February. Our new online system requires CAT 5 cabling and multiple new drops. That work is underway and will be finished within the next month. Gayle, Iris, Scott and Doug head these efforts.
3. Outreach – the outreach program presents many challenges. Staff is looking at all aspects of operations and finding that there are many holes. We will work on policy issues to present to the board for consideration and action. We will also look at service and delivery options. We plan to convene retirement center directors and activity managers to discuss and troubleshoot this very popular partnership with the community. Jane and Outreach staff will conduct a program assessment with assistance from Gayle and others.
4. Migration – the new system installation is a major undertaking. Our “go live” date is September. However, an enormous amount of prep work must be completed, complicated by the fact that it is a joint procurement with the county. The new system impacts virtually every library function from acquisitions to remote patron access. Not only must a host of policy issues be reviewed and reconciled, but also authority issues must be addressed, database cleanup must proceed as must data conversion and finally training (for all modules) must begin. Each element presents its own set of complexities. Eight months of lead-time is not too much.
5. Ballot measure – the need for a new library is not in question. However, the perception of that need must be firmed in the public consciousness. A successful outcome requires conviction, political will, and, doubtless, a resolute spirit. Alas there are other complicating factors such as EMS and the property tax roll back initiative, to mention only two; but those are issues beyond

our control. We are fortunate to have some expert volunteer help. And, I am pleased to report that Rowenn Kalman, a graduate student at Western Washington University, will be helping us with some of that “soft” research we discussed at our last board meeting. She is working under the guidance of Joyce Hammond, Ph.D., Anthropology Department, teaching Participative Action Research.

The Fairhaven Friends plan a grand centennial year. On their agenda is the development of one or two preservation grant applications to address foundation drainage damage. They are also exploring exterior lighting options for the east wall.

You will notice as you review Claims that we have purchased a cache of emergency supplies, items highly recommended by the City’s emergency preparedness team. In the event of an earthquake, we will be equipped with basic resources for 72 hours.

Those are the highlights of plans for the year, i.e., a lot of work to do!