

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

December 2004

Library Director's Report and Highlights

December 21, 2004

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BUDGET PASSES: LOOKING FORWARD

After months of discussion, hard work, and public feedback, the 2005 budget was passed by the City Council. During the next year, the Citizens Budget Advisory Committee will have their work cut out for them, along with the City Council, Department Heads, city staff members, and others. The mechanics of setting up this committee are not determined yet, but of this we can be fairly certain: the budget process will be lengthy, thorough, and will have the fingerprints of many individuals on it. This is good.

In preparation for 2006 – and the years ahead – we will be providing detail about our library services and associated costs. We will learn together the intricacies of not only the library budget – but of all city departments. We will need to get very clear on what services we offer and why – and why we do things the way we do. We must provide the best possible library service in the most efficient, effective way. All this, as we also look forward to planning for the future of library service in Bellingham.

LOOKING BACK

We have much to be grateful for at the end of this year. Here are just a few:

An incredible *We Share a Story* celebration, this year with an international storytelling focus. I was honored to serve as a witness to the Nooksack ceremony at the Community College on November 16th.

Superb **city leadership**: several of us attended a Leadership Breakfast featuring Finance Director Therese Holm, and Mayor Mark Asmundson, speaking about the budget.

Active **civic groups** such as the City Club, featuring interesting speakers and offering an opportunity to network with others.

Enthusiastic volunteers who give their time, talents, and physical energy to **Friends of the Library** meetings, booksales, newsletters, and other special events such as the Maude Heyes Fischer Reading Awards ceremony. This was a gratifying event to attend and to witness several young people honored for their reading efforts. Kids who read – succeed!

A dedicated Friends committee at the **Fairhaven** Branch. They provided the funding for “The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe” production on December 2nd, and orchestrated the **100th birthday** celebration of the Fairhaven Branch on December 11th. A landmark event!

An effective **State Library** (your Library Director is now certified to operate in the State of Washington).

Interested and involved **City Council** – Bob Ryan contacted me to meet in advance of the budget work session to discuss the library's budget; all council members show their interest and dedication to making this a great place to live and work.

Local media, dedicated to reporting what is happening in Bellingham – did you catch the KVOS interview with Yours Truly during the Friends Booksale? Joe Bates even included Green Bay Packers footage – cool.

Wonderful **computing equipment** to make all the writing in this job seem effortless. I'm personally grateful for all the help I receive from staff in figuring it all out.

A knowledgeable, inclusive, and energetic team of **City Department Heads** that give everything they've got to their jobs and this city. I was pleased to participate in the interview process for the City's CAO. As well, I've had the opportunity to get to know a couple of the Department Heads better by scheduling lunches with the Finance Director, Parks Director, and Human Resources Director during the last month.

A superb staff. Need I say more? One of our librarians was recently approved by the City Council for an upgrade from Catalog/Reference Librarian to Systems and Bibliographic Services Librarian. These job audits take time, study, and hard work on the part of the staff, the Director, and the Human Resources staff.

I also want to mention that we are working with our Outreach staff to continue to provide service even during a time of staffing shortages because of a staff medical leave. We may not be able to provide the same level of service – and we are reviewing how we can accomplish what is most important.

Commendations to all the staff who have reviewed and weeded the oversize collection in order to provide needed space for other materials. This is a necessary task, and one that does not receive recognition. Additionally, staff met twice in December to review our materials collection development in 2004 and to allocate the materials budget for 2005. This is our “bread and butter”, and as you know, our materials budget is currently at the 2002 budget level.

Dedicated Library Board members! You are to be commended for your work in 2004, and I look forward to working together with you in 2005. Your presence at meetings other than our regular Library Board meetings does not go unnoticed – by me – and by others. Thank you so much for your dedication to this library.

Happy Holidays!