

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 2006

Director's Report and Highlights
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Submitted by Pam Kiesner

Writer's Block, Great Conference, and Good Reads

This report being composed a week earlier than usual, I find myself with writer's block. Let me therefore briefly highlight some items of interest which I suspect I'll expand upon during our Library Board meeting.

As it always is, the **Public Library Association Annual Conference** was fantastic. A record-breaking 11,000 people attended, an indicator that these seminars have gained a reputation for a wise use of time and resources. I will share highlights with you at the board meeting. Mark your calendars now for the 2008 conference in Minneapolis!

When I began working for the Bellingham Public Library, the staff included in a gift book bag, two of **Jo Dereske's Miss Zukas mysteries** among the many fun and delicious gifts from this part of the country. It was a great read on the plane to Boston – and an even greater delight to meet her at the **Friends of the Library** Annual Meeting yesterday. She was the guest of honor, speaking about her love of libraries, books, reading – and librarians! We heard about her new book in the works, Bookmarked to Die. We will have to wait over a year to find out (in another new book upcoming) where this fictitious Bellehaven Public Library is located!

I also finished reading The Good Rain. Finally! Joan Airoldi recommended it soon after we arrived in the Pacific Northwest. As I leave tomorrow for my first trip back to Wisconsin and the Midwest (or “back east” as they say out here) I'm bringing along Deep Change (recommended by Carl Oekerman) and The Year of Magical Thinking (I reserved it after hearing author Joan Didion interviewed on NPR). What are you reading? Who recommended it to you?

Speaking of reading, in your packet of Library Board materials, I've included a recent OCLC report that I thought you would find thought-provoking. According to this study, “Borrowing print books” is the library service most used, and “books” is the library brand - a wonderful and natural association for libraries, but these results show that it may be more difficult to break through the library stereotype when we want to market other important resources the library provides, such as electronic resources. We'll discuss the conclusions briefly.

Prior to our board meeting, the librarians and I will be having a discussion of Malcolm Gladwell's bestseller, Blink – and Paco Underhill's book, Why We Buy. Staff has indicated interest in discussing some of these provocative topics which have an impact on how our customers view and use libraries in this retail-rich world. We need to know the lingo and the research as well, and it's fun to work with folks who want to know more.

See you at the Board meeting!