

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

July 2009

Director's Report and Highlights July 21, 2009

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Thoughts on an interview

Today I had the pleasure of interviewing with a Bellingham Public Library employee who is studying to receive her library degree through the University of Arizona – online. Several thoughts occurred to me following our conversation:

v Our public libraries are in great shape with students like Amy and Jenna (another employee leaving soon to enter the University of Washington Information School). They are inquisitive, smart, customer oriented, and enthusiastic! We are fortunate to have them on staff.

v This library provides exceptional training for anyone interested in library work or the profession, and I dare say, our library is in part responsible for instilling this interest. We develop our staff to be team players who are service-oriented, responsible, and resilient. These work qualities will remain with them no matter what kind of work they choose, and especially if they choose library work.

v Much has changed since I went to the University of Michigan School of Library and Information Science – thirty-five years ago! Many library schools have dropped the word “library” (for instance, it’s the University of Washington iSchool now); courses are available virtually so that students like Amy can remain here in Bellingham while studying in Arizona; and while I advised her to work for her teaching degree at the same time, we discussed the recent economic downturn which shows school librarians being let go, or stretched thin across too many school buildings. Times are changing.

v Amy and Jenna are fortunate to be part of the Bellingham Public Library team. This library is loved and well-used by the community it serves – 18.7 items checked out per capita – another record! They will have wonderful tales to tell in the classroom – or online. Their experiences in this public library and in this community of library enthusiasts will be hard to surpass. This community of readers and learners is a wonderful example of why libraries are important today. Living and working in Bellingham provides a solid baseline for Amy and Jenna as they begin their careers.

See you at the Library Board Meeting on Tuesday!