

**San Antonio Public Library  
Director's Report  
January 23, 2008**

**Administration**

**Director's Office**

The Grand Opening of the Igo Branch Library on December 8 was the highlight of the month. A standing-room-only crowd participated in the official ceremony (San Antonio Park Police who assisted with the event had to close the parking lot because it was filled), and the library stayed busy all day long. Special thanks go to Soonalyn Jacob and Carmen Ramírez for all their help in organizing the day's events; to O'Connor High School, whose student council provided children's crafts, spirit groups served as greeters and ushers, and choir performed during the day; and to the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation. The event was covered by the *Express-News* and WOAI-TV.

Library Director Ramiro Salazar continued his initiative to keep communications open by meeting and interacting with library staff. On December 6, he presented recognition certificates to staff members whose work was displayed in the annual "Just for the Art of It" show. On December 7, he spoke at a retirement party for Central Library custodian Maria Dávila and that evening attended the City's Annual Employee Awards Banquet. On December 11, Mr. Salazar hosted a luncheon for the Library's Management Team and sponsored a pizza party for the Central Shelving Unit, celebrating their achievement in raising funds for the City's United Way campaign. On December 17 he attended REFORMA's monthly meeting and holiday reception at the Central Library, and on December 22 the Library staff holiday party sponsored by the San Antonio Public Library Staff Association, REFORMA and the Central Library M.O.D. (Meeting Other Departments) Squad.

Mr. Salazar attended two meetings to discuss planning for the new District 3 library, one on December 11 and the second on January 8.

On December 11, Mr. Salazar was interviewed by KABB-TV for a story on the Grand Hyatt's donation to the Little Read Wagon Program.

Continuing to create and maintain community ties, Mr. Salazar attended the Biomed SA annual award dinner on December 13. On December 15 he was in attendance at the premier of the new book about Emma Tenayuca, *That's Not Fair! / ¡No es justo!* by Carmen Tafolla and Sharon Teneyuca. Mr. Salazar accepted copies of the new book on behalf of the Library.

Mr. Salazar met with Bexar County IT Manager David Morgan on December 17 to continue work on the interlocal agreement for county library services.

Also on December 17, Mr. Salazar met with local Holocaust scholar and historian Harry Mazal. Mr. Mazal, who has an extensive collection of Holocaust documents, has offered them to the Library for use in a digitization project. The meeting was arranged by District 8 Council Representative Diane Cibrian, who is interested in the possibility of creating a Holocaust library/museum/research center in San Antonio.

Beginning work on the Library advocacy campaign, on December 18, Mr. Salazar, Library Board Chair Jean Brady, Library Senior Management Analyst Jessica Ramos and Library Public Relations Manager Beth Graham met with public relations and political consultant Frank Guerra of Guerra DeBerry and Coody. Also attending were Library Foundation CEO Kaye Lenox and community

activist Rosie Castro. Special thanks are due to Ms. Castro, who arranged the meeting. As a result of the meeting, Mr. Guerra agreed to offer consulting services on a pro-bono basis.

Mr. Salazar attended orientation sessions for new Library Foundation Board members of January 10, welcoming them to the Foundation and explaining the library's structure and operation. On January 16 he attended the regular monthly meeting of the Foundation Board.

On January 17, Mr. Salazar met with Ann Van Pelt and Veronica Salazar of the Landa Gardens Conservancy for a site tour and to discuss the garden restoration project.

### **Automation**

The Automation department has worked with ITSD Communications personnel to upgrade the network for all library branches but the Pan American Branch Library, which is scheduled to be completed by January 31, 2008. The CMS public computer reservation and print management software has been installed at all but the Landa and Oakwell branch libraries. These two locations are scheduled to be completed by January 31, 2008.

One hundred desktop computers have been ordered to replace out-of-warranty computers that have failed and the oldest public computers in operation. Two Toughbook laptop computers are on order to support library outreach services. Special thanks is due to the Library Foundation for making this purchase possible.

### **Branch Services**

Branch Services Coordinators Joel Bangilan and Barbara O'Hara interviewed and hired 21 people to fill Library Assistant vacancies, both full- and part-time, across the system.

As a new Branch Services Coordinator, Ms. O'Hara has been visiting branches and meeting staff. In December and January, she visited Brook Hollow, Carver, Cody, Landa, McCreless, Bannwolf/Reagan, San Pedro, the Tobin Library at Oakwell, Pan American, and Cortez. Ms. O'Hara's aim is to strengthen the branches by coaching managers and staff, and finding out how she can help staff improve their relationships with the community.

Ms. O'Hara also consulted with staff at San Pedro in order to begin enhancing collections there. She also visited Semmes, Thousand Oaks, and Carver for their Martin Luther King programs.

Ms. O'Hara says, "I am impressed by the professionalism and expertise of my co-workers, and grateful for their assistance during this time while I learn SAPL's history and management processes."

Joel Bangilan served on an interview team to select three Librarian 2 candidates.

He made site visits to Bazan, Collins Gardens and Great Northwest, where he and staff discussed branch-specific issues and concerns and began to develop action plans.

Mr. Bangilan has assumed responsibility for the new bookmobile and met with Matthews Specialty Vehicles to discuss design needs for the new bookmobile. Construction of the bookmobile is on schedule for delivery this spring.

Mr. Bangilan met with the Texas Library Association Programming Committee for Conference 2009. He has been nominated to run for secretary of the Public Library Division of TLA.

During the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, Mr. Bangilan attended the Advocacy Institute workshop, where he learned some strategies to garner support from our

communities and legislators. The point that was most applicable to SAPL was that the library should keep promoting library services to stay in front of the public.

Mr. Bangilan is also a member of the Asian and Pacific American Library Association (APALA). This group's charge is to provide leadership to librarians who serve Asian or Pacific American communities and to support librarians of that heritage. He currently serves as APALA's representative on the ALA Diversity Council. Additionally, he is a member of the Asian and Pacific American Award for Literature (APAAL) Committee, which met to consider possible award recipients.

The ALA Diversity Council met to discuss issues across ALA that need attention to improve services to traditionally underserved groups. The council discussed programming for a conference to provide orientation on diversity issues for new ALA members. It is collaborating with the New Members' Round Table to create that seminar.

### **Children's Services**

Reaching out to children in need was a major initiative in December 2007. Children's Services staff participated in the Santa Soul event at the Claude Black Community Center on Saturday, December 15. Over 300 copies of *Green Eggs and Ham* were distributed to children from low-income families as part of the center's annual Christmas event. An additional 500 copies of *Green Eggs and Ham* were distributed to low-income children through the Family Service Association's Project Hope. All of the books distributed included a book plate with a "Happy Reading" message from the San Antonio Public Library. The remaining copies of the book, which came to the library through the efforts of the Library Foundation, will be distributed through Head Start centers in late February.

Children's staff participated in two additional outreach programs: the Foundation's Breakfast with Santa at North Star Mall on December 8 and the HEB Feast of Sharing on December 22. Both of these events included opportunities for attendees to register for library cards.

On January 3, members of SAPL's children's staff completed a thorough review of the "Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries." These competencies, authored by the Association for Library Service to Children, outline in very broad terms the goals and objectives of children's librarianship. Local review of the competencies has yielded a substantive list of training needs to be addressed in the coming year.

From January 10 through January 15, Children's Coordinator Viki Ash was in Philadelphia to attend the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting. During that conference, Viki helped to select the winner of the 2008 Sibert Medal. The medal has been awarded annually since 2001 to the most distinguished informational children's book published in the preceding year. The 2008 Sibert Medal winner is *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* by Peter Sis. Two honor books were also named by the Sibert Committee: *Nic Bishop: Spiders* by Nic Bishop and *Lightship* by Brian Floca.

### Little Read Wagon

At the end of January Little Read Wagon concluded the first *Para los niños* series at the McCreless Branch Library. Parents, informal caregivers, and children enjoyed fun activities, stories, and books to build their home libraries. Those who previously visited the library once or twice a month are now in the habit of going every week. The program was introduced at many District 4 schools in January in preparation for the series to take place at the Pan American and Johnston Branch Libraries. Little Read Wagon would like once again to thank the branch staff for hosting these events.

Twenty-nine early childhood professionals have been recruited in preparation for Little Read Wagon's new teacher training format. These teachers, referred to as "Everyday Experts," will have the opportunity to share ideas and activities from their classrooms as part of our monthly workshops.

## **Public Relations**

Public Relations Manager Beth Graham coordinated the Igo Branch Library Grand Opening on December 8. The event was attended by Mr. Igo, District 8 Council Representative Diane Cibrian, and many members of the community. On the Monday following the opening, Mr. Igo left the following message on Ms. Graham's voice mail: "John Igo, no need to call back. I'm just calling to thank you for helping organize that magnificent thing that happened all day. I just had a telephone conversation with a woman who said that was the most beautifully organized event that she has been to. She said things were going on all over the place, and all coordinated and smoothly done. And she said I don't know who was behind that; and I said I don't either, but I suspect I know. So I'm passing it on (if it wasn't you, which I doubt) if it wasn't you, will you please pass on our gratitude. Thank you."

Ms. Graham worked with the Library Foundation to design and distribute a special library holiday "gift card" to be given out in the community encouraging people to get library cards. The cards were distributed at the H-E-B Feast of Sharing and through the San Antonio Police Department's Blue Santa program. A gift bag with ten cards was also delivered for the Mayor and each member of the City Council, as well as to City Manager Sheryl Sculley and Assistant City Manager Frances González.

As a result of the City employee survey taken in the summer of 2007, each department was asked to develop a staff communication plan and to assist with the development of a City-wide employee communication plan. Ms. Graham is serving as the Library's representative on that work group and also developed the Library's plan.

The San Antonio *Business Journal* asked to run an item on library construction planned for 2009. Library Director Ramiro Salazar and Assistant Director Aubrey George contributed information for the article.

The Library's new telephone renewal service received coverage on KABB news on December 14, as well as coverage on the Grand Hyatt donation to the Little Read Wagon program and giant holiday card for the community displayed in the Central Library lobby.

Ms. Graham was invited to serve on the local planning committee for the annual Texas Public Relations Association conference to be held in San Antonio in February 2008. She is working on the Awards committee.

In support of the Big Read initiative, Ms. Graham has been meeting with community organizations and businesses to develop publicity partnerships. So far, the *Express-News*, KLRN Public Television and VIA Metropolitan Transit have agreed to participate.

Ms. Graham is also serving on the steering committee for the *Hablando de la salud de la mujer* [Speaking of Women's Health] conference scheduled for September 2008. The 2007 steering committee has just completed its debriefing and review of last year's conference and work on the 2008 conference will begin at the end of January.

## **Kudos to staff - Customer comments**

**Sara Gill** called to let the library director know that she had visited the Central Library on January 13 to research an article about "smart money." Ms. Gill said that **Andrew Jung** helped her with her search and when she was unable to find the article she was looking for, Andrew asked for her email address and told her he would research it later. She was pleasantly surprised to receive a follow-up on Monday to let her know he was still working on it. Andrew finally found it and emailed her a .pdf

file of the article she needed. Ms. Gill said Andrew went above and beyond the call of duty and should be commended for it. – January 16

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“Hooray for the Children's librarians! Great storytimes. Both ladies [**Cara Waits** and **Lisa Taylor**, /go] helped me with some references – very kind and helpful. I especially liked how Cara tried to call all [45] preschool children by name!” – **Jenny Knight**, January 14

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“I wanted to thank you so much for having a wonderful staff at Las Palmas Library. They are so thoughtful [and] helpful, and they always do their best to keep the library quiet so we can concentrate or just enjoy the quietness. And my daughter Giselle and I are so grateful for Ms. **Gina [Brudi]** with the children's craft and Ms. **Heidi [Novotny]** for the teen craft. We really enjoy hearing stories and making the crafts relating to the stories. I can't imagine not having all the Las Palmas staff there, they are beautiful people, like family” – **Priscilla Guerrero**, January 13

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“Dear Mr. Salazar:

“Too often, people write letters with a concern or a complaint. This isn't one of those. This letter, however, is long overdue.

“I visit the Main [Central] Library frequently, sometimes several times a week. The experience is always pleasant because your staff throughout is top notch. I want to single out the **circulation staff** on the first floor. The personnel are always friendly and helpful. I don't know all of their names, but I would like to mention the few that I do know: **Gracie [Rendón]**, **Susan [Castillo]**, **Juan [Borrego]**, **Thom [Wood]**, **Judy [Jennings]**, **Chris [Solis]**, **Rose [Gonzales]**, **Guadalupe [Salinas]**, and **Vera [López]**. I asked one of them why they enjoyed their jobs, and credit was given to their supervisor, **Mike Howdysshell**. There are others whose names I do not know, but every one of them is an asset to the Main Library.

“In August, I discovered the **Interlibrary Loan System** and have utilized it as much as possible. The staff in that office has been very helpful as well, especially **Gamini Haluwana**. I have visited his desk occasionally, each time with a warm greeting and a smile from him. He has educated me on the system and solved the "little problems" with my loans from other libraries. He must be very easy to work with. I wish him the best with his future, wherever that may be.

“Because of your fine staff, I look forward to my visits to the Main Library. My hope is that it will always be this way. Thought you'd like to hear it from a library patron” – **Rick Carabetta**, January 7

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“My name is Michael Cervantez. I am a Vietnam Era veteran. I served there from 1967 to 1968. I am writing this letter to inform you of an outstanding librarian named **Monty Holcomb** who works at **McCreless** library.

“I went to the McCreless library to gather information about the army unit I was assigned to when I was in Vietnam. After looking for some time, I was not able to locate any information, and, not knowing how to use the computer, I asked Mr. Holcomb for help. He immediately proceeded to find books on this subject and locate maps of the country. All of this as he was helping others with their needs.

"As for researching information on the computer, they were all being used and he did not have time to individually help me while I was there. Instead, Mr. Holcomb unselfishly volunteered to research my any unit whenever he was able to find the time.

"I want to recognize and thank Mr. Holcomb for all his help and assistance and ask that this letter be placed in his personal file. - Sincerely, **Michael Cervantez**"

December 24, 2007

The Central Branch Library  
600 Soledad Street  
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Attention To : Director, Mr. Salazar Ramiro

Dear Mr. Ramiro

I write you in the interest of a Guerra Library Branch employee named Mr. Eric Backhus. I have attended this facility in usage for the past three years. My experience with this branch has been both platonic as well as educational, due to the many talents of Mr. Backhus. I have been able to cross the "digital divide" and learn technology due to skill in Mr. Backhus' faculty. The altruistic endeavor of his merits through the sacrifice of his times has molded me into a knowledgeable individual. The kindness of this gentleman are just a few of the many professional traits on his behalf that transform the Guerra Library into a warm environment which promotes the frequent usage of this institution by people like myself. Please consider the fruits of his merit as a valuable asset.

Sincerely  
Leonard J. Warwick

### **Committees and Work Groups**

The RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) project continues to move forward with the installation of RFID tags and equipment. Currently, the Cody, San Pedro, McCreless, Igo and Westfall branch libraries are using the self-check system with great success. The Great Northwest Branch library is completing the tagging process and will start using the self-check system when tagging is completed. This two-year project will provide better inventory control of library resources, increased security for library resources and improved customer service in all libraries.

### **Central Library**

#### **Children's Department**

On December 31, the staff of the Central Children's Division said farewell to Irene González, who retired from the library after 27 years of service to the children of San Antonio. In addition to her years at the Central Library, Irene worked at both the Brook Hollow and Bazan Branch Libraries. Her extensive knowledge of children's literature, her Spanish language skills and her commitment to outstanding customer service will be missed greatly by her Central Library co-workers.

During January 2008, the Central Library is featuring folktales of the Brothers Grimm as the centerpiece of Family Fun programming. Stories such as *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* and *Rumpelstiltskin* are being featured each Saturday afternoon along with complementary art projects.

#### **Circulation**

The Central Circulation Unit has continued to produce the overdue, hold notice and bill mailers for San Antonio Public Library. For the month ending December 31, 2007, the unit transmitted 29,175 overdue/hold/bill notice electronic mail messages. Additionally, 29,378 overdue/hold/bill mailers were printed and processed. The task is accomplished through the teamwork of the entire circulation staff.

The Telephone Renewal system and the Auto Printing of Overdue Notices was implemented this month and it appears that the number of printed mailers decreased by nearly 17,000.

#### **Texana/Genealogy**

On January 5 Matt DeWaelche and Jo Myler presented "Preserving Your Family Treasures" to a group of nine.

On January 7 - Sylvia Reyna and Debbie Countess taught group of seven in a hands-on computer class entitled "Beginning Genealogy: the Internet as a Source for Genealogical Research."

Matt DeWaelche and Texana/Genealogy volunteer Ira Lott taped a segment for the February edition of "Cover to Cover," in which they discussed the African-American funeral programs collection.

Over the holidays Texana/Genealogy was visited by a number of students researching topics related to History Fair projects.

Displays for January and February in Texana/Genealogy include 19<sup>th</sup>-century valentines from Harry Hertzberg's collection, African-American history, African-American funeral programs, and railroads in Texas. (The railroad arrived in San Antonio in February 1877.)

Among the gifts received in December and January were Texana books and maps from Joann and Jim Davis of Uvalde. The maps are of particular interest as they are military training maps of west Texas from about 1900 to 1920.

Nelson Clare donated a collection of bound copies of the *Alamo Heights News* from 1948 through 1956. The years 1949 and 1951 are missing. It would be appreciated if anyone with other volumes would contact the Texana/Genealogy Department.

About 200 more funeral programs were donated to the African American Funeral Program Collection, which now includes almost 2,000 items.

Retired librarian Linda Hachet, formerly of Texana/Genealogy, came for a visit and donated more San Antonio post cards she has found since moving to Michigan. Linda continues to work on the House Index. She added indexing for 1929 to the index beginning in 1905. This index lists articles and larger ads for the building of houses and other buildings, architects, and builders mentioned in the *San Antonio Express*. Another such index covers the *Light* for 1905 through 1929.

Staff have re-housed and created finding aids for several archival collections: the San Antonio Bi-Centennial Committee, some district court cases (37th District Court) between 1909 and 1913, additions to Mayor McAllister's collection, and small collections of papers for Mayors Jack White, Gus Mauermann, and Alfred Callaghan.

## **Branch Libraries**

### **Bazan**

Staff at the Bazan Library are pleased to announce the return of the dual math tutoring program partnership with the PALS (Peer-Assisted Leadership Services) organization at Churchill High School. On January 19 regular spring semester math tutoring for school-age students began, as well as another six weeks of last year's pilot program of math tutoring for fifth-grade students who are preparing for the TAKS test this year. Last year's fifth-grade project involved at least sixteen students from various local elementary schools and provided small group tutoring for them. A greater effort is being made to publicize and assist those students with repeat sessions this year. The Bazan Library and the PALS organization feel very strongly that this free tutoring being provided to children in this disadvantaged area is a first step toward positive results for students who want to raise their scores to better meet the educational challenges of the near future.

Staff are also happy to announce the arrival of additional personnel from other branch libraries, as a result of the 2007 Staffing Study. The first to arrive was full-time Library Assistant Patricia Rodriguez from the Great Northwest Branch Library. Recent arrivals included part-time Circulation Attendant Isabel Salinas from the Guerra Branch Library and part-time Library Assistant Marisa Sparks.

The Bazan Library is currently working on weeding worn and outdated materials and tagging other materials for RFID.

### **Brook Hollow**

In anticipation of RFID, the entire staff is actively involved in weeding materials. As a result, the collection looks clean and the titles up-to-date. Additionally, the librarians are keeping track of weeded titles so that they can be replaced as funds become available.

The Brook Hollow Friends have elected a new board: Richard Bowser, President; Beverly Jackson, Vice-President; Neal Bjornson, Treasurer; and Sylvia Griffin, Secretary. The fact that this board has two former Brook Hollow employees shows that Brook Hollow creates loyalty and fellowship among its patrons and staff.

On a monthly basis, Brook Hollow hosts the San Antonio Storytellers Association. The branch is proud to host them and hopes the public will join in the fun of learning storytelling skills.

Storytimes at Brook Hollow had a brief lull during the holidays. Children's Librarian Leigh Bedford used the extra time to write staff evaluations and re-arrange the craft cabinets.

A small plaque has been placed on the wall in the children's area of Brook Hollow. The plaque honors the memory of Christine González, who was a regular storytime attendee and died suddenly at age three.

Librarians Beth Schorlemer and Leslie Riebesehl attended a Holiday Luncheon hosted by the San Pedro Hills Women's Club, longtime Brook Hollow supporters.

The Brook Hollow staff pride themselves on offering a wide variety of book displays and once again they have outdone themselves. "Best of 2007," "Fantasy," "Just for Fun," and stories featuring cold weather were all proudly displayed for Brook Hollow patrons to enjoy.

And best of all, Library Assistant Mary Smith is now the proud holder of a MLS degree, awarded in December! Congratulations, Mary!

### **Carver**

On December 17 Carver Branch Library conducted a Christmas craft program presented by the Prairie View A & M Extension Service. Parents and children joined Grace Guerra in making scented cinnamon ornaments, simmering scents, and "magic" reindeer food.

January marks the celebration of Martin Luther King Day. Temporary Children's Librarian Ginger Payne presented two programs entitled "Follow the Dream: a Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King."

On January 19 Antoinette F. Winstead, Director of the Communication Arts Department at Our Lady of the Lake University, delivered a memorial lecture in honor of Dr. King. Professor Winstead, a poet, short story writer, and author of several novels, is a graduate of Columbia University and the New York University film school. She has written four screenplays and nine plays, and directed twelve theater productions. Her plays have been presented at the Steven Stoli Playhouse, Jump Start and the Continental Café. Currently, she serves on the Renaissance Theater Guild Advisory Board. She is a past president of the San Antonio Poet's Association.

Also on January 19, the Guardian Angels Dance Troup presented "Dancing through the Journey," a look at the dance as it traveled from 19<sup>th</sup>-century Africa to the modern-day United States.

The Carver library staff would like to thank the Carver Friends of the Library for the beautiful poinsettias they donated to the library. In addition, special thanks goes to the Carver Friends for sponsoring the Guardian Angels performance at Carver in celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

### **Cody**

On December 7 and January 4, outreach was provided to the Merrill Gardens assisted living center, with book talks on Barbara Goldsmith's *Other Powers* and Fanny Flagg's *Redbird Christmas*, respectively. The film club met December 8 and January 5; the Mystery Book Club, the Thursday Book Club and the Saturday Book Club took a hiatus in December but resumed in January.

On December 12, a dedicated group of 15 foodies received cooking tips from award-winning chef Scott Cohen, author of *Texas Hill Country Cookbook*. On January 9, thirteen visitors listened to and discussed Trinity University Professor Carey Latimore's study on Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. On January 16, author and television personality Patsy Swendson gave a talk about her book about pet therapy, *Penny's from Heaven*. VITA began offering tax assistance on January 23.

On Friday, December 7, Cody hosted fifteen four-year-olds from Howsman Elementary for storytime. The theme for their program was Community Helpers. Cody also hosted a Polar Express Pajama Party on December 10 to celebrate the Christmas holidays. The program included a reading of the book *The Polar Express* by Chris van Allsburg along with crafts, refreshments, and a visit from Santa Claus. Families were treated to two holiday movie showings, *The Polar Express* on December 17 and *The Nightmare before Christmas* on December 27.

Cody Branch performed a community outreach program on January 10, at the Fredericksburg Road Parent/Child Incorporated, site, a child care center. Thirty-four children attended the program.

In teen services, a holiday gaming competition was held with Dance Dance Revolution on January 2 and Guitar Hero on January 3. Each day a large chocolate bar was awarded to the winner and a small chocolate bar to the runner-up. A new anime club for teens visiting the branch after school began on January 14 with a showing of *Ghost in the Shell*.

Upcoming programs:

February 2 Chinese New Year Film Festival (titles to be announced)  
February 9 Celebrate Black History Month with jazz performer Cecil Carter  
February 16 "The Best Movie Ever Made: *Casablanca*" presented by *Express-News* film critic Larry Ratliff

### **Collins Garden**

The two-week series of computer classes offered at Collins Garden Branch Library by Community Initiatives was well attended. Sometimes it was even necessary for people to share laptops so that all who wanted to attend could participate. The Public has been grateful for the opportunity to expand their knowledge of and hone their skills in using various computer processes.

While working the evening shift during the holiday season, Circulation Attendant Julia Alvarez was on her way back to the staff area to help with the cash count and was asked by a pre-teen boy for help using the computer. He told her that he did not have a place to sleep that night and was looking for his father. Julie noticed that he was searching throughout the entire state of Texas so she asked him if his dad lived in San Antonio. The young man said that he thought his father lived near Collins Garden Branch Library and that he had not seen him in a couple of years. Instead of using the computer to search for the boy's father, Julie took him to the *Polk Directory* to look for addresses under the father's name near Collins Garden. They found three and Julie let him call the nearest person, who turned out to be the boy's father. She asked to talk to the father to find out if he would be picking the boy up and the father said he would be right over. As the young man was leaving, he said a teary thank you to Julie. She wrote, "This made me proud to work in a place where we provide all kinds of information and that we do make a difference in the community."

### **Cortez**

The Cortez staff warmly welcomed new Branch Manager Rebecca Johnson on December 17.

On January 4, the staff had a going-away party for Floater Librarian I Jody Hampton, who has been reassigned to Cody. Jody had been with the Cortez Branch since its reopening in September. In addition to his help with reference and DSA responsibilities, he created a James Patterson Read-Alike display and a Notable Books of 2007 display that was very popular with branch patrons.

Jerry Madrigal taped a segment of "Cover to Cover" to promote the upcoming series of jazz performances at various branches of the library. The performances, which are in honor of Black History Month, feature an informal demonstration and discussion about jazz by San Antonio educator and performer Cecil Carter.

Twenty-two international students visited Cortez on January 15. They are teachers from Central America participating in a program sponsored by the Alamo Community College District. The students were issued library cards and Jerry Madrigal gave the students a tour of the library and a brief explanation of the resources and services available to them during their year-long stay in San Antonio. The students plan to present a series of programs at the Cortez Branch about the history, culture and folklore of their respective countries.

During the December vacation children enjoyed several films in the remodeled meeting room. Children's Librarian Carol Collins served snacks and helped children prepare designer party hats for New Year's Eve.

In addition to Carol's weekly preschool storytimes, she made her first storytime visit to the nearby Parent Child Incorporated center. She presented two programs to 56 children at the PCI center on January 9.

### **Forest Hills**

#### Programming

Adults: On December 8 and January 12, Professor Ralph Thompson led the book discussion for the Contrarian Viewpoint Book Club, which considered *The World is Flat: a History of America in the Twenty-First Century* by Thomas L. Friedman and *Opposing Viewpoints: America in the Twenty-First Century* by Andrea C. Nakaya. On December 12, ten members of the Embroidery and Needlework club met to continue the basic embroidery class. In addition, the History of San Antonio Book Club met to discuss the Siege of Bexar and the book, *Texans in Revolt: The Battle for San Antonio, 1835* by Alwyn Barr.

Children: Children's Librarian Marcia Valvo made a great pitch of library services to about 120 family members attending the local Head Start Christmas present give-away planning meeting. In January, regular Tuesday morning storytimes with crafts resumed for groups averaging in excess of 20, and regular Thursday outreach to a nursery school numbering about 40 children per visit.

#### Collection

Weeding has continued throughout the entire collection. Media, including DVD's, VHS, and books on tape, have been weeded and shelved together. In addition, the entire paperback collection has been weeded and room has been made for the inclusion of newer titles. Weeding in the adult non-fiction areas continues. In the juvenile collection, Marcia Valvo continues to weed the fiction area.

#### Interior

The branch has been decorated for the upcoming Valentine's Day Holiday. In addition, the plan to construct a display for African-American Heritage Month continues.

#### Staff

Branch Manager Roberto Zapata attended the ALA Midwinter Conference in Philadelphia January 10 through January 14. He finished his work as an appointee to the Caldecott Committee.

### **John Igo**

Igo's first full-month of operation has been very exciting for both the community and staff. Numerous notes of appreciation and verbal declarations from happy customers come in on an almost daily basis. The public seems to love virtually everything about the new branch, from its architectural design to its friendly and helpful staff. The number of requests from outside groups wishing to use the two meeting rooms has been a testament to the increased awareness of the public who now view libraries as institutions that meet much more than just reading and traditional informational needs. Of the many newer features brought to SAPL this past year, Igo's customers repeatedly tout

the convenient self check-out terminals, telephone renewals, less time spent at the circulation desk, etc.

Work on building's punch list continues. The windmill and its water feature, as well as enhancing the wonderful outdoor reading area near the heritage oak tree and nearby fountain, are of particular interest to the public, many of whom have expressed their desire to have tables and chairs available to sit outside so that they may enjoy their checked-out library materials and simply bask in the beautiful surroundings.

Staff at Igo have been focusing strongly on creating ways to "get the word out" that the library is now open. Strategic planning for outreach to various community groups has begun in earnest with plans to tackle many different segments of the community. A great effort has been especially apparent in the number and variety of programs that are planned in the near future, and in the response of the public to the programs already offered. As an illustration, the very first preschool storytime had over 70 people in attendance! And the number has grown each subsequent week!

John Igo Library is quickly becoming THE place to be for many of San Antonio's nearby residents! Everyone involved in making this project come to fruition deserves hearty congratulations and should know that all their hard work and efforts are truly being appreciated by those the library serves.

### **Johnston**

With the departure of Branch Manager Cheryl Sheehan to the Igo Branch, Special Assignment Librarians Amy Williamson and Tracey Knouse have taken up temporary residence at Johnston. Both have proved themselves to be assets to the branch in the relatively short time they have been there.

Tracey has shown that she has a real flair for creating colorful, engaging book and media displays. She has also tackled several major weeding projects and helped with a host of other tasks.

Amy has assumed the role of children's librarian, holding a storytime on Mondays that she accompanies with displays that feature the theme and craft for the upcoming week's storytime. She is also planning on starting a preschool storytime on Thursdays. She and Tracey both worked on a *Spiderwick* theme display, touting the books in advance of the film's release.

Johnston's Interim Branch Manager Rich Fields, a former railroader, assisted with a railroad-themed storytime at the Great Northwest branch on January 7 by donning his uniform, announcing actual station stops, and "conducting" a Q & A session about railroading for the kids and parents in attendance.

Special Assignments Librarian Amy Williamson has contacted the library at Lackland Air Force Base about promoting Johnston storytimes

### **Landa**

The renovations on the grounds at Landa Branch Library are moving along. In the last two weeks, plants, trees and grass have been planted. The members of the community garden, which is part of the Landa Gardens Conservancy project, are also in the process of getting organized and planned a work day on January 19 to continue to clean out the flower beds where the community garden will be located.

### **Las Palmas**

Since the installation of the CMS software in October, staff had noticed that public computer user numbers dropped. Staff proposed several theories for the drop: customers uncomfortable with a new

way of signing up; if a customer had heard that a library card was needed, that could have been a problem to someone with a blocked card, who wouldn't necessarily know about options, and that fines aren't a deterrent to computer use; CMS involves more responsibility, as customers have to monitor themselves on the waiting list and the assignment list and not just wait for their names to be called. However, in December the access statistics returned to pre-CMS levels, with more than 3,000 users. Whatever the reason, staff were glad to see the numbers return to normal!

Children's Librarian Gina Brudi is fine-tuning her story hour skills, visiting branch libraries to observe other librarians in action. To date, she has presented weekly Family Fun sessions to an audience of 93. Ms. Brudi presented her first outreach sessions to the Mirasol PCI center, introducing her puppet mascot Sandy the Snail to sixty children, and leaving classroom collections for the three groups she visited. She was also part of the library team that brightened the holidays for families at the Dwyer Shelter Santa Soul event.

The PC Learning Program Young Explorer, presented in partnership with the DCI Benavides Office and area day care centers, finished its trial run in December, with 8 classes and 41 pre-schoolers listening to Ms. Brudi's stories and songs.

Librarian Heidi Novotny's decision to move the regular teen program from a Saturday to a Monday has been well-received. A total of 11 teens attended the "creating a Native American bracelet" program. A total of 20 teens either decorated a clay ornament for their tree, or created holiday bead bracelets to wear. Saturday was movie day, with an audience of 12 munching on popcorn as they viewed the manga movie *Howl's Moving Castle*.

Ms. Brudi and Ms. Novotny have both completed Customer Service and Cash Handling training. Ms. Novotny also completed New Employee Orientation.

Librarian Karen Michaelson presented several December programs for the Las Palmas community. Library customers enjoyed Christmas Caroling presented by the Choir members of San Juan de Los Lagos Church, and 24 "crafty" folks created beautiful holiday wreaths to keep or to give as a gift. After discussing Jan Karon's *At Home in Mitford*, book club members enjoyed holiday food and fellowship.

### **Maverick**

Maverick staff celebrated the holidays and stayed quite busy with special programs for both children and adults. Over the holidays, the branch hosted a storytime craft, programs on starting life insurance and identity theft, a visit by Kindermusic, and computer classes.

Additionally, most of the branch's regular groups chose not to take a holiday break. Maverick's chess groups, Needlework Guild, Fiction Writers Guild, knitting group and neighborhood associations held their regular meetings. The book groups also had great attendance.

### **McCreless**

Two days in December an instructor at the Billa Learning Center brought her ESL students to the library. Manager Cammie Gunter conducted the tours of the facility and was pleased to see how many students came back to get library cards.

For the Christmas holidays the Friends of the McCreless Library once again purchased poinsettias grown by the Highlands High School Future Farmers club. The poinsettias were big and beautiful and each staff member got to take one home after the first of the year. The Friends also provided a cash donation that was used to pay for a Christmas pizza party for the staff.

Also just in time for Christmas the library received its long-awaited compact disc displays. The money came from the McCreless Gift and Memorial Fund. The racks are beautiful and the drawers operate smoothly much to the delight of staff and public alike.

The library has been hosting the "Para Los Niños" series of workshops presented by the Little Read Wagon. The turnout has been very good for all the sessions and both Little Read Wagon and McCreless are very happy with the partnership.

The library has been blessed with a "Fairy Godfather" in the person of Charles Adkisson. In the last three months he has personally donated \$600 toward the Friends to be used for special purchases.

On January 17, Children's Librarian Beverly Bixler visited the Highland Hills Parent Child Incorporated site and presented four classes with a special storytime.

On January 20 Beverly presented a special event featuring the *Spiderwick Chronicles* with book talks, crafts and a guessing game.

## **Memorial**

### Staff

Library Assistant Stephanie Vázquez transferred to the Cortez Branch Library. Stephanie managed the reference desk and periodicals and created amazing displays. She is currently pursuing her MLS degree and the Memorial staff wish her the best in all her future endeavors. The staff held a chocolate party for her on one of her last days.

The Memorial Amigos, Friends of the San Antonio Public Library, provided a full meal for the staff's annual Christmas party. It was a wonderful event with many of the Amigos joining the staff for lunch. The Amigos group is also working with Library administration to make the branch flagpole functional again.

### Outreach and Programming

Children's Librarian Sheila Acosta visited Madison Elementary School's bilingual pre-kindergarten classes to tell winter stories and promote librarianship as a career.

The month of December was festive with decorations, displays, and programming. All teen times, storytimes and family fun times included holiday themes and activities.

Special events included:

- Holiday movies presented for students who were out of school.
- A classical guitar holiday concert performed by Moisés Hernández
- The second visit of Santa and Mrs. Claus to the library – a tremendous success! This phenomenal event hosted over 100 children and their parents. Because of the huge crowds the Claus family brought Elves Pauline and Paul to assist. For many children this was their only Christmas activity and chance to visit with Santa. Children's Librarian Sheila Acosta included stories, music and craft activities.

### Toys for Tots

The Memorial Library staff worked diligently to promote the Toys for Tots drive. The toys turned in exceeded one full box.

## **Pan American**

Pan American Branch held programs for teens throughout December and January. Each Wednesday at 5:30 teens visited for games and/or crafts. Fifteen teens participated on December 19, and made jingle bell bracelets and then played Lotería. The day after Christmas, five teens

played various games. January 2, three teens made greeting cards. Games were played by twelve teens on January 9. In honor of Martin Luther King Day, on January 16, Peace Poetry was shared.

Adult programming took a break in December. Only the Monday evening Tai Chi classes continued, even on Christmas Eve when six adults came at 3:30 p.m. so they would not miss their exercise. This program has proved to be very popular, with between 12 and 20 adults meeting every Monday evening to practice Tai Chi.

On December 8, children, teens and adults were invited to make Christmas tree decorations to decorate the branch's tree and also to take home. There were 19 participants.

Family Fun was held Mondays at 3:30 p.m. On December 3, *The Mitten* was the story and nine attendees made a felt mitten to take home. Eleven participated on December 10, with "Do You Have a Hat?" and they made hats. A short break was taken for the holidays and January 7 was the kickoff for 2008, with four attendees making cellophane windows during the craft program. Three participated in the January 14 program, sharing *Danny's First Snow* and making shoebox winter dioramas.

The ABC Club met on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. The letter N was featured on December 12 and twenty children made paper neckties. For December 19, nineteen children watched the movies *The Snowy Day* and *The Snowman*. Octopus hats were made by 23 children on January 9, in learning about the letter O. January 16 was a Pooh and Piglet Party time with a Pooh cake, made by Children's Librarian Raissa Marking, and punch for 20 participants.

Raissa visited children at the nearby Parent Child Incorporated childcare center on Thursday, January 17 and also took free books to the WIC clinic after that visit.

Staff members have been busy tagging books since mid-December, in preparation for RFID service. They began with the adult large print, completed all categories of adult fiction, and adult nonfiction through the 600s. Branch Services Coordinator Barbara O'Hara presented a class of the FISH principles of work to staff on Monday, January 14.

### **Reagan High School/Bannwolf Library**

The Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School welcomes Jan Jones to the library staff. Jan will work as the part-time librarian in charge of planning story times, gathering materials for crafts programs, and serving as reference librarian during evenings and one weekend a month.

As of January 1 the Bannwolf Library is open an additional two hours per week. Now the library officially opens at 4 PM on Monday through Thursday. The library will add more hours beginning on June 8.

The Bannwolf Library has also added programming for all ages. Elementary age programs are held every Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. Marva Allen is in charge of the programs that include crafts, making healthy snacks, fitness activities, and learning sign language. Teen programs are held every Wednesday. High school activities begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by middle school at 6:00 p.m. Heidi Hoecker is in charge of the programs that include games, book clubs, crafts, and teen talk. Adult programs are held every Thursday at 6:00 p.m. Hugues Caby is in charge of the programs that include movie night, computer basics, foreign language, and other special programs. Family fun continues every Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

New shelving recently arrived for several areas of the library. The Kid's Corner received new shelves for the beginner books and *fácil* [easy] books. The entire room has been rearranged to better serve

the needs of the youngest customers. Shelving was also added for new books, magazines, large print books, and library pamphlets.

On Saturday, January 19 the Bannwolf Library held a special Martin Luther King Day story time. Marva Allen read stories on friendship and peace. Families were then invited to make a Peace Dove for the craft activity. Many families enjoyed participating in the newly rearranged Kid's Corner.

### **San Pedro**

On December 17 the branch staff shared a pot luck luncheon in honor of the holiday season.

On December 20 the branch staff welcomed new Branch Services Coordinator Barbara O'Hara, who toured the library and spoke with Branch Manager Michael Kaminski and Children's Librarian Betsy Dalton about the needs of the library and other issues. Michael also gave Barbara a brief tour of San Pedro Springs Park.

Part-time Library Assistant Jean Frederic has received training from Technical Services in regard to managing the branch periodicals collection.

On January 14 two outdoor benches donated by the Friends of San Pedro Springs Park were installed in front of the library.

Michael Kaminski was a panelist for the interviews to fill four DSA positions for the library system on January 15 and 18.

On January 17 Michael Kaminski and Betsy Dalton met with Barbara O'Hara, Robert Beebe and the Collection Development staff to discuss the long-term plan for the San Pedro branch collection.

On January 17 the communications network for the branch was upgraded.

There were three teen programs in December. Each program had three participants. During the first program, the teens worked on a Simpson's word search and then played the Simpson's Clue game. During the second program, they created two crafts, a Christmas tree ornament, and a decorated votive candle holder. The last program was a meeting of the Graphic Novel Book Club, which meets the last Tuesday of each month. The book chosen for December was *D. N. Angel, Volume 1*.

There were three storytimes in December. The theme for the month featured the various holidays celebrated at this time of year. Attendance ranged from a low of two at the first story time to a high of ten at the second story time. For the first story time the Children's Librarian read books about Hanukkah and also *Crispin Had It All*. The children played in an empty cardboard box and used their imaginations to turn the box into a clubhouse and a truck. During the second story time, a silly snowman counting story was told using the flannel board, the children were introduced to a snowman finger play, and then sang "Jingle Bells," with each child given jingle bells to shake. "'Twas the Night before Christmas" was the highlight for the last story time. Following the reading of the story, the children followed the Children's Librarian in a parade inside the library pretending that they were reindeer delivering gifts to the poster board houses recently constructed by library staff. The children really enjoyed the programs.

There were also three B.A.C.K. (Books and Crafts for Kids) Pack programs designed for elementary school children in December. Each program had three participants. The first program discussed Hanukkah – the children read a book aloud about the history of Hanukkah and then played a memory game using the characters on the dreidel. During the second program, the children created Christmas tree ornaments and a decorated votive candle holder. During the final December

program, the Children's Librarian read "'Twas the Night before Christmas" and made bracelets from red and green beads.

On December 18, the Hawthorne Academy Lunch Bunch book club met. The book read by the 17 students was *Charlie Bone*. There was a lively discussion about the value the children placed on various powers held by the characters in the book. The children chose *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, recently announced to have won the Caldecott Award, as January's book.

On December 20, Betsy Dalton met with the Director of the Kenwood Parent Child Incorporated to discuss monthly visits to the center to present storytimes to the classes. It was agreed that on the first Thursday of the month, the Children's Librarian would visit Kenwood and present storytime to three of their younger classes. Julia Lazarin (Little Read Wagon) will present story time to four classes. It was also agreed that the librarians would bring ten books to each class each visit and would pick up the ten books left on the last visit.

### **Semmes**

Semmes Branch Library received a new display of artwork this month from the Blue Star Arts Complex. The new artist is Deborah Keller-Rihn and a reception will be held for her on January 26. She will be conducting an art workshop for school-age children in March.

Children's Librarians Randi Jones and Wendy Fox have begun outreach to the community Head Start program. These visits are weekly and involve storytimes given in a total of five classrooms. A selection of books is also dropped off at the site for one month and replaced on the following visit.

Saturday, December 15 was the first presentation of Semmes Cinema. *Polar Express* was shown to an audience of over thirty children and adults. Since then, a second presentation has been made of this monthly program; *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was shown on January 12.

On December 28, KLRN again visited Semmes with their early school readiness activities for parents or caregivers of small children.

Semmes' fledgling writer's workshop met again on December 26. Another new foray into creativity was begun on the evening of January 14. "Open mike night" will be a monthly opportunity for poets, creative writers and musicians to present their art to an appreciative audience. The first event brought out two poets and one guitarist who performed for a small audience of poetry enthusiasts.

Clearing out clutter and achieving a sense of organization was the focus of a program on the morning of January 18, presented by the program director of Professional Organizers of San Antonio.

For the entire month of December Semmes was beautifully decorated for the holidays. All of the credit and appreciation is due to the Friends of Semmes, who continue to be a wonderful support for this branch.

### **Thousand Oaks**

Thousand Oaks Branch was decked out for the holidays due to the efforts of the Friends of Thousand Oaks. The Friends hung beautiful wreaths on the end of the shelving units, put up two Christmas trees, and made the juvenile section look especially interesting with garland and many toy decorations. In addition to putting the public in a cheerful holiday mood with their decorations, they lifted the spirits of the staff with Target gift cards in appreciation of their hard work.

Branch Manager Christine Palmer attended the December meeting of the Hills of Park North Neighborhood at the Tool Yard on December 11. The main topic of concern to the citizens was the

development of the quarry on Thousand Oaks and how it would impact the neighborhood. Ken Brown, the quarry developer, spoke at the meeting and said the plan for the area included a football and a baseball stadium for Northeast ISD, soccer fields, a lake and family park area. It also includes many new commercial eateries and shops. The project should increase the traffic and activities around the neighborhood and the library.

The very successful Science Club Program met for the last time on December 19. This was a program created for school age children by Library Assistant Barbara Kwiatkowski. Ms Kwiatkowski did simple experiments with the children during the weekly after school program. The programs were well attended each week by basically the same group of children and their parents. The last program dealt with acid and bases and the children tested the acidity in many household objects and products, such as vinegar, apples, limes, dishwashing soaps, regular hand soap, etc. Since it was the last meeting of the Science Club Ms Kwiatkowski gave the participants a pizza party to celebrate.

The Friends of Thousand Oaks planned and presented a "Meet the Author" program on Sunday afternoon, January 13, inviting local romance author Allison Pittman to speak about her work. Ms Pittman discussed how she began to write and her road to success in actually getting published. Her talk was lively and she reserved time to answer questions from the audience. Ms Pittman has had two books published which the system owns, with a third book coming out in May 2008. The Friends were pleased with the turnout of seventeen people, including District 10 City Councilman John Clamp and his wife. The audience was enthusiastic and the Friends are now considering sponsoring more programs like this during the upcoming year.

January is Get Organized Month so Library Assistant Barbara Kwiatkowski created a display in the foyer with helpful hints on how to get your life organized and uncluttered. To make the point and catch people's attention she displayed a Barbie doll's cluttered desk and closet. Continuing with this theme, on January 14, Cynthia Cunningham presented the program "Bring in the New Year – by Cleaning out the Clutter". Ms Cunningham is a member of the National Association of Professional Organizers and the Program Director of Professional Organizers of San Antonio. The program was enjoyed by twelve participants who were hopefully inspired to put into practice the many ideas given at the program.

### **The Tobin Library at Oakwell**

Customers continue to comment on the great new look and features of the Tobin renovation. Staff members each expressed their thanks for the changes they appreciate most in a card sent to the Tobin Endowment. The Endowment sent their thanks right back in the form of a gorgeous arrangement of yellow roses (just the right color to complement the warm new décor!)

The Tobin Library at Oakwell Book Group was among several groups featured in the January/February issue of *San Antonio Woman* in an article titled "Treasure hunting in the River City: find stimulating book clubs, free classes and more". Author Nancy Glass West profiles reading groups at five SAPL branches, as well other local sources of intellectual diversion.

Recognizing a great opportunity to make Christmas gifts for their sisters, tween boys eagerly joined the girls in a jingle bell bracelet craft program on December 16. A recent Dance Dance Revolution session was also well-attended, during which the participants asked if they could have a Guitar Hero program, too. The meeting room was free the following afternoon, so one of the students brought in his own game and everybody played away.

Apparently many folks are determined to keep their New Year's resolution to get organized, as over thirty people attended the January 15 "De-clutter" workshop.

## **Westfall**

Westfall staff members Monica Garza and Imelda Merino held a family Christmas celebration on December 12. During the celebration parents and children were given the opportunity to make beaded ornaments and to decorate paper stockings. Refreshments were provided for the families. During the celebration, patrons were treated to showings of *How the Grinch stole Christmas* and *The Muppet Christmas Carol*.

The yearly staff holiday party was held on Christmas Eve. Staff members exchanged gifts and shared a potluck meal. Everyone really enjoyed the time together.

Christmas Eve was also the day that our new staff member Vera López started at the branch. Ms. López transferred to Westfall from the Central Library, and the entire Westfall staff is very glad to have her on board.

December and January have proven to be very busy Internet sign-up months. The CMS automated sign-up system is constantly in use. The Circulation staff is continuing to issue record numbers of library cards. In other technology-related news, the self-check stations are now operational in the branch. Many patrons have taken advantage of the ability to check out their own materials. One patron enjoyed using the system so much; she wished she had picked up more books to check out.

On January 16 and 18 Westfall presented activities in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, including some special storytimes. Librarian I Monica Garza also created an MLK book display to celebrate the holiday, as well as a healthy lifestyle display in the library's foyer. Library Assistant Theresa Ybarra also put together a book display encouraging people to "Learn Something New in the New Year." Department Systems Aide Andrea Silva undertook the responsibility of tax form distribution and created an eye-catching display to help guide people to the branches tax form section.