

**San Antonio Public Library  
Director's Report  
March 26, 2008**

**Administration**

**Director's Office**

In accordance with the staffing plan developed in 2007 and endorsed by the City Manager and approved by City Council during 2007-2008 budget cycle, beginning Monday, March 31, all library branches will add four additional public service hours to their schedules. The expanded schedule will increase service hours from 60 a week to 64, or approximately 4,696 additional public service hours per year.

On Mondays, the Bazan, Collins Garden, Cortez, Johnston, Landa, Memorial, San Pedro and Westfall branches and the Tobin Library at Oakwell will open at 9:00 a.m. instead of 1:00 p.m.

The Brook Hollow, Carver, Cody, Forest Hills, Great Northwest, Guerra, Igo, Las Palmas, Maverick, McCreless, Pan American, Semmes, and Thousand Oaks branches will all stay open an additional four hours on Thursday evenings, until 9:00 p.m.

The Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School also received additional staffing through the Library's contract with the Northeast Independent School District and has already begun opening an additional two hours per week during the school year. This branch will be open an additional fourteen hours per week during summer vacation.

Government officials have been notified, a news release has been sent, and signage is being developed to alert customers to the extended hours.

The San Antonio Public Library was deeply involved in the democratic process during the presidential primaries. Of the top ten busiest early voting sites, seven were libraries:

1. Crossroads Mall	10652	18. Olmos Basin Golf Course	3949
2. <b>Brook Hollow Branch Library</b>	<b>7208</b>	19. Bexar County Justice Center	3765
3. Shavano Baptist Church	6127	20. Huebner Elementary School	3628
4. <b>Julia Yates Semmes Branch Library</b>	<b>5907</b>	21. <b>Henry A Guerra, Jr., Branch Library</b>	<b>3450</b>
5. <b>The Tobin Library at Oakwell</b>	<b>5819</b>	22. Nichols Elementary School	3440
6. <b>Ed Cody Branch Library</b>	<b>5801</b>	23. Montgomery Elementary School	3227
7. <b>Las Palmas Branch Library</b>	<b>5683</b>	24. <b>Collins Garden Branch Library</b>	<b>3044</b>
8. <b>McCreless Branch Library</b>	<b>5316</b>	25. Shoppers City	2791
9. Universal City City Hall	5263	26. VIA Metro Center	2542
10. <b>Maury Maverick Branch Library,</b>	<b>5212</b>	27. <b>Leah Carter Johnston Branch Library</b>	<b>2433</b>
11. Northside Activity Center	5124	28. <b>Raúl A. Cortez Branch Library</b>	<b>1861</b>
12. <b>Great Northwest Branch Library</b>	<b>4964</b>	29. Fair Oaks Ranch City Hall	1687
13. South Park Mall	4607	30. East Central ISD Administration Building	1405
14. Claude Black Center	4462	31. Southside ISD Administration Building	764
15. Wetmore Elementary School	4351	32. Somerset High School	595
16. Lion's Field	4212	33. Frank Madla Elementary School	449
17. Stone Oak Elementary School	3963		

On Election Day, March 4, some branch libraries that were polling sites stayed open for the precinct conventions until 10:00 or 11:00 p.m., and in at least one case, had to reopen even later than that. Library Director Ramiro Salazar received a request in the early morning hours of Wednesday, March 5, to open Thousand Oaks Branch Library to allow election officials to retrieve some ballots to

complete the vote count. Branch Manager Chris Palmer reopened the building at 1:30 a.m., the ballots were found, and the count continued.

Due to the anticipated heavy turnout on Election Day and at the precinct conventions, the City activated the Emergency Operation Center on March 4 in order to anticipate and prevent any possible problems. Interim Assistant Director for Public Services Kendra Trachta joined the Library Director to staff the Center for the library.

Plans for the grand opening and ribbon-cutting for the Landa Gardens are underway. The garden grand opening will take place at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 1, followed by an open house at the library until 2:00 p.m. The library will close early to allow the Landa Gardens Conservancy to prepare for their gala the evening of May 1, and then reopen on its regular full service schedule at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, May 2. A news release has been sent out with this information, which has also been posted on the library's web site, and banners have been ordered to display on the fence around the library.

Thanks are due to the Friends of Brook Hollow Branch Library for funding the remodeling of the branch's kitchen area, and to the Library Foundation for donating a laptop computer to the library's graphic design office.

On March 6, Mr. Salazar, Library Board Chair Jean Brady, and Foundation Chair Guillermo Nicolás met with District 10 Councilman John Clamp to discuss library issues and to thank him for his initiative to have a flagpole installed at the Semmes Branch Library.

Interim Assistant Director Kendra Trachta, Public Relations Manager Beth Graham, and Capital Projects Manager Rich Walker represented the library at the official first flag-raising ceremony at the Semmes Branch Library. Library Board Chair Jean Brady, Branch Services Coordinator Joel Bangilan, Senior Management Analyst Jessica Ramos, and Beth Graham represented the library at the grand opening of District 1 Council Representative Mary Alice Cisneros' field office on Vance Jackson Road.

Mr. Salazar, Special Projects Manager Roberta Sparks, and Branch Services Coordinators Joel Bangilan and Barbara O'Hara will attend the biennial Public Library Association conference in Minneapolis March 26 through 30. All four will staff the library's placement booth and will participate in recruiting efforts.

### **Automation**

Automation has worked to have the remaining necessary data drops and jack activations performed at branch libraries. One hundred twenty desktop computers have been received to replace the oldest public facing computers in operation. The City's IT department announced that limited staff desktop computer replacements would take place this fiscal year.

### **Branch Services**

This month Barbara O'Hara met with the twelve branch managers she supervises to discuss their evaluation goals, the yearly goals to improve the manager's performance in guiding and leading staff, and services, for their particular branches.

As part of the Big Read initiative Barbara led the second session of the book discussion facilitation workshop for 22 staff and community members.

Barbara is working with the Landa interior renovation team that also includes Rich Walker, Aubrey George, Kathy Claspill, Kathy Donellan, and Ray Fraga. The project includes new carpeting, interior

painting, marble restoration, new furniture, and other improvements for the branch. Landa reopens to the public May 2 on its full schedule, after an open house and gala celebration.

She will be attending the Public Library Association Conference March 25-March 30 in Minneapolis. Barbara is a member of the PLA Intellectual Freedom Committee (she assisted with research on intellectual freedom for the Library Director), and will also attend sessions on management and leadership.

Barbara and Capital Projects Manager Rich Walker met with the Friends of Brook Hollow Branch Library to discuss the renovation of the staff kitchen.

She also attended a meeting with Joel Bangilan, Robert Beebe, and Martha Knott to discuss the acquisition of Playaways, a new audiobook format.

Joel Bangilan has continued to visit those branch libraries that fall under his supervision, going to Maverick, Memorial, and Westfall. He also met with staff at Igo, Great Northwest, and Bazan to offer coaching and to facilitate teamwork exercises. He also spent election night working with the staff of Memorial to provide reference and crowd control at the polls. He met with the Special Assignment librarians to include them in some decisions and to give them some instructions.

Joel is working with Special Projects Manager Roberta Sparks to implement the library's New Employee Orientation Week. He facilitated two "Overview of the Library" and three "Intellectual Freedom" presentations for new employees.

He attended the opening of District 1 City Council Representative Mary Alice Cisneros' Field Office, representing the library along with Board Chair Jean Brady, Senior Management Analyst Jessica Ramos, Public Relations Manager Beth Graham, and Westfall Librarian Monica Garza.

### **Children's Services**

The library's children's services division is partnering with the KLRN Kids Club by preparing a monthly recommended book list the children's librarians, which KLRN highlights on their website. In March, the reading list was the featured article in their kids' newsletter and may be viewed at <http://www.klrn.org/KlrnKids/bookclub2.htm>.

The Young Pegasus judges completed their deliberations on Thursday, February 28. The judges selected 80 poems for inclusion in the 2008 Young Pegasus Anthology. These poems represent the creative endeavors of 61 poets from 28 schools, as well as seven poets who are home-schooled. The youngest poet in the 2008 anthology is only five years old. There were 1,376 poems submitted this year, which means that just fewer than 6% of the poems were deemed worthy of publication by the judging panel. Work is currently underway to secure release forms from the selected poets, type and proofread the selected poems, and ultimately, print the anthology. The 2008 Young Pegasus Awards Ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, May 4.

### Little Read Wagon

This month Little Read Wagon completed a second series of *Para los niños* programs, hosted by the Johnston and Pan American Branch Libraries. Little Read Wagon staff appreciates the use of the branch facilities and opportunity to encourage new customers to use more library services.

Little Read Wagon continues to visit schools and community centers city-wide. Corinne Sánchez has been making visits to parenting classes at numerous high schools. Each of the Little Read Wagon staff also makes monthly visits to one Early Head Start or Head Start center. During these visits a short storytime program is presented. A collection of ten to fifteen books is exchanged every month. The Youth Outreach Cards have been very valuable in the effort to provide a variety of appropriate books for each classroom.

On March 18 a full day of training was presented to teachers for the Texas Migrant Council's Head Start program. The group of nearly fifty early childhood professionals included bus drivers and cooks in addition to classroom teachers. Little Read Wagon shared information on brain development, early literacy, and literacy skill-building activities. Julia Lazarin has been working closely with volunteers for the new Early Literacy with Everyday Experts workshops for teachers. The volunteers, all current classroom teachers in high-quality facilities, plan their presentations via forms, visits and discussions with Ms. Lazarin.

### **Facilities**

New fire alarm panels have been installed at the Central Library. Testing and inspection of the system are currently in process.

### **Public Relations**

The Board Public Relations Committee (Elda Flores, Lora Devlon Eckler, and Laurie Gruenbeck) met by conference call on Thursday, March 14. Items discussed included volunteer and Library Champion recognition.

Thanks to Texas Public Radio, the library has formed a partnership with Owl Radio (the San Antonio radio reading service for the print-challenged) to promote The Big Read and *To Kill a Mockingbird* to Owl Radio users. The publisher has given permission to play the audio version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* on Owl Radio. Texas Public Radio and the library will publicize the reading and encourage eligible potential Owl Radio customers to enroll for the service. It is hoped that this partnership will increase Owl Radio membership and allow them to extend their services further throughout Bexar County's print-challenged community.

The library has been notified that the John Igo Branch Library has been selected for recognition by *American Libraries* magazine in its annual design and facilities issue. Every year, the magazine's April issue features articles and photographs spotlighting new, expanded, and renovated library buildings. A showcase of exteriors and interiors of all kinds, this special issue features some of the best in library designs, as well as accounts of successfully completed restorations. This year, 28 public, academic, school, and special libraries were selected for inclusion.

The Big Read kickoff on March 2 received coverage from the *Express-News* (including an editorial on March 8), KABB, WOAI, and KWEX/Univision.

Public Relations Manager Beth Graham attended the Texas Public Relations Association annual conference February 29 through March 2. Beth served on the host committee for this year's conference, which was held in San Antonio. She has been invited to serve as a judge for the annual Central Ohio chapter of the Public Relations Society of America PRism Awards for outstanding public relations initiatives, and on the strategic planning committee of the Texas Public Relations Association.

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

"Please recognize **Julia Alvarez** for her excellent customer service and helpful attitude extended to the patrons of **Collins Garden Library**. Julia is ready to assist and make recommendations with our various requests. She always 'runs the extra mile' to assure our visits to the library are successful and enjoyable. Julia is an excellent role model for new employees and a valuable asset to Collins Garden. Thank you for honoring her for excellent job performance." - **Barbara A. Mariani**, February 29

Richard García called the Director's Office to express his appreciation for the great library (Memorial Branch) in his community. Mr. Garcia would like the library to recognize the outstanding customer service offered by Memorial Branch employees. He mentioned that the staff and supervisor Melva Ramirez were "doing a tremendous job and are very courteous, always willing and ready to help patrons with locating or renewing books or with issuing applications for library cards." Mr. Garcia also called the City Manager's Office to let them know that the staff at Memorial Branch are doing an excellent job. – March 3

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Recognition of a SAPL staff member from an internal customer:

"I just wanted to let you know how pleased the staff has been with **Ricardo's [Sánchez]** work since he took over deliveries for Johnston Library. He is always friendly and professional. Ricardo was very resourceful in resolving the backlog of boxes for delivery to Central's Book Cellar for us as well. I just wanted to recognize him for his conscientious efforts and excellent work ethic." - **Tracey Knouse**, Librarian I, Johnston Library, March 6

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**Robert Ritterbach** visited the Director's office to commend **Wilson Plunkett** [*Government Documents*] for the excellent customer service he provided. Mr. Ritterbach called Government Documents one evening after 6:00 p.m. requesting some specific information on Bill Clinton and Henry Cisneros. When Mr. Ritterbach arrived at the Central Library at 9:00 a.m. the next morning, the research was waiting for him in Government Documents. Mr. Ritterbach said he is always impressed by the quality service he receives at the Central Library, but believed Mr. Plunkett truly went above and beyond to take care of his needs. – March 6

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"My comment is [about] services at the **McCreless Library**. The service was outstanding. You see, I am a student at Park University. I used your library for my studies and the help was great. **Nancy Roy** and **Destiny Byrd** have been great!" – **Walter Johnson**, Adkins, Texas, March 9

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**Jesse Galván** called the Director's office to say how impressed he was with the service he received from **Beatrice Canales** at **Las Palmas Branch Library**. He said he was there about three days before Election Day, at about 10 minutes before closing time, to print out a newsletter he had been working on, and asked for help when he thought he needed to print on legal-size paper. Beatrice looked at his document, made a few formatting edits and printed it for him on letter-sized paper. Mr. Galvan was very happy and impressed with the level of expertise demonstrated by Beatrice in that short amount of time. He wants her to be recognized for her great work. – March 12

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"...I visited **Igo Library** this past Sunday, March 9. The circulation attendant **Joe [Butcher]** was exceptionally polite, respectful and very helpful. I went to go pick up a book and he went out of his way to show me exactly where the 'holds' section was located. He actually walked me over to the section and showed me how to search for the book. His people skills are commendable. The whole checkout process was an incredibly comfortable experience. I was very impressed. I wasn't a particularly easy customer, but that encounter made my pessimistic beginning end in an optimistic note. I applaud your employee on his people skills. We need more workers with that professional spirit. How blessed you are to have employees like him and I am happy he is in our neighborhood!" – **Ana Leyba Delgado**, MLS, MA, March 13

## **Projects and Initiatives**

This section offers a regular update on initiatives undertaken by library staff teams:

### **Web Redesign**

The Web Services Team is continuing to move forward with the Web Redesign project. Juanita López is working with the trial evaluation of the E-vanced Events module to configure email settings, test event registration, and view online presentations. Glenn Parker is working with the web team and key committee members to create the database layout and scripts associated with delivering dynamic branch information via the internet. The goal is to provide branch-specific information for patrons, including addresses, hours, VIA Metropolitan Transit routes, and maps. Interim Central Library Coordinator Jennifer Velásquez is helping to design the banner header and the layout of the Internet home page. The team continues to provide a wide variety of updates to web content, photo uploads, event publications, and pages to promote special events and projects, including the Big Read, the names of the pie-baking contest winners, and Book Club Kits.

### **RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)**

The RFID project continues with the installation of RFID tags and equipment. Currently, the Cody, Semmes, San Pedro, Igo, McCreless, Great Northwest and Westfall Branch Libraries are using the self-check system. While the Great Northwest has not completed the tagging process, they lack only the audio-visual media collection. In February the Cody and Igo Libraries had more than 50% of circulation occurring at self-check units while other branches have less than 20%. Staff will determine if this variance is related to user education, the placement of the self-check units or other factors. The Bazan, Brook Hollow, Carver, Johnston, Las Palmas, Tobin and Pan American libraries are in various stages of the tagging process.

At the Central Library, call numbers 000-699 have been completed, as well as the large print and science fiction collections. All audio books on CD have been tagged. Virtually all DVD's and most of the music CD's have been completed as well. The Central Children's Department is in the process of tagging books. They have completed all the picture books and fiction and are now in the process of tagging non-fiction. It is estimated that over half the children's print collection has been tagged. To date, the staff has tagged approximately 35,000 items.

## **Central Library**

### **Children's Department**

The return of spring marks the beginning of school tour season at the Central Library. School groups from across the city make their way to the Children's Department to visit the building, enjoy stories, and often get library cards. The groups range in size, from less than 20 to more than 100. The youngest group to visit Central so far this spring was a group of 104 pre-kindergarten students. When a group this young tours the library, it is the shapes and colors of the building that get the attention, rather than the arrangement of the books on the shelf.

Special Assignment Librarian Amy Williamson has joined the Central Children's staff temporarily. Her assistance in staffing the children's desk, preparing craft supplies, working on the RFID project and a multitude of other tasks is greatly appreciated.

### **Reference**

The Central Reference Department submitted two grant proposals on improving health literacy in the ten ZIP codes identified by Metro Health as high risk for public health: a \$5,000 Express Outreach Grant from the National Library of Medicine (SAPL grant committee Natasha Arguello, Adam Spana, Jimmy Jimenez and Sally Bauer) and a \$50,000 grant from the Humana Foundation and Libraries for the Future (SAPL grant committee Natasha Arguello, Didi Bowen and Elma Nieto-Rodriguez.) The library has not been notified of receipt of these awards yet, but as a direct result of collaborating

with the UT Health Science Center Libraries on these projects, 84 public service staff were trained in the National Library of Medicine databases, including PubMed, MedlinePlus and other health consumer resources.

Carmen Roja and Pannaga Prasad organized a program, "Financial Aid Applications for Free College Money" on March 1. The workshop was presented by the Council for South Texas Economic Progress (COSTEP), an agency which provides information on funding higher education. The auditorium was filled with parents and students.

On March 8, Dan Stanford provided SAPL resource information to more than 75 attendees at the Low Vision Expo 2008. Non-profit organizations and vendors that provide resources for individuals who are blind or who have low vision gather at this event annually to provide consumers with one stop-access to information and services. The library has been a participant for the past decade.

### **Texana/Genealogy**

On March 3 Andrew Crews presented a program about genealogy software to a group of six.

Guest speaker Denise Huddle D'Abre discussed land title research during a special program on March 15. Ms. D'Abre has 22 years of experience in private investigations, genealogy, and real estate title examination. Her topics included meaning of chain of title, definition of grantor and grantee, deeds, mortgages and promissory notes, releases, oil and gas records, probate, vital records, deeds of trust, and vendor's liens.

The family of Gloria Cadena donated her book collection and research files to the Texana/Genealogy Department. Mrs. Cadena was a well-known Hispanic genealogist and a founder of Los Bexareños Genealogical Society. Even as staff are re-housing and archiving the files, they have been used to assist patrons in their research. The books are being inventoried, and cataloging has begun.

Texana/Genealogy staff are processing former mayor William "Bill" Thornton's papers.

Displays in the Texana/Genealogy Department feature "Texas' Women," "Texas Music and Poetry," and "Texas Arts and Crafts."

### **Youth(wired) Teen Services**

#### Weekly Programs

**Mondays with Regina Almanza:** Mondays are devoted to video games. Guitar Hero and Dance Dance Revolution are alternated on Monday nights, and a couple of Nintendo Gamecube games have just been added to the mix. Every first Monday night is the Guitar Hero tournament. On March 3, 27 teens participated or watched the tournament. A winner's list hangs on a wall in the Round Reading Room in Youth(wired).

**Tuesdays with Kathleen Fordyce:** The Round Reading Room was packed when teens played Dance Dance Revolution on March 4. Teens had fun playing board games such as Blokus, Scrabble and Monopoly for Game Nights on March 11 and March 13. On March 18, teens made beaded bracelets and necklaces using pony beads and beading lace.

**Wednesdays with Sylvia Pachecano:** On February 27, Sylvia a Valentine's edition of Wednesday's Book Teen Book Talks. Featured titles focused on non-traditional love stories such as *The Hook-Up Artist*, *Twilight*, *Faerie Path* and *Blood and Chocolate*.

**Thursdays with Regina Almanza:** The last winter program was held on February 28. Teens used fabric paints, stickers and gems to personalize their own photo albums. On March 6, teens had an

opportunity to make springtime decorations for the department. Artist Xavier Garza stopped by on March 13 and helped teens design and produce their own buttons to wear for the upcoming César Chávez March. On March 20, teens watched the anime film *Across the Universe*.

#### Other Programming

On March 1 the Baka Onigiri Con Ost (Stupid Riceball with Cheese) International Anime/Manga Club held its monthly meeting. Eight teens watched and reviewed anime from ADV films for possible purchase for the collection.

Sylvia Pachecano supplied teens with craft materials to make a “Good Luck” keychain. She also led a group in making jeweled Easter eggs.

#### Teen Tech Week: March 2-8, 2008

Youth(wired) celebrated Teen Tech Week with after-school video games! On March 3, teens played Guitar Hero II. On March 4, teens played Dance Dance Revolution. Teens loved playing MarioKart on March 5 and Super Smash Brothers on March 6.

#### Tours and Groups

On March 11, art classes from Fox Tech High School used the Youth(wired) computers for class projects. On March 13, Ms. Pachecano conducted a tour of the library for students from George Gervin Academy. The students also received catalog and database instruction. Regina Almanza conducted a tour of the library for students from John Jay High School on March 14. Kathleen Fordyce provided catalog and database instruction to these students.

### **Branch Libraries**

#### **Bazan**

During late February and early March, the Bazan Branch Library was visited by Internal Revenue Service representatives from Washington, D.C., and Houston, who came to observe the VITA (Volunteers in Tax Assistance) Income Tax Assistance Program. The officials from Houston said that they wanted to open sites modeled after the one at the Bazan Branch Library because of its efficiency and how well it handles its customers. They were impressed with the high rate of tax returns processed and with how well Spanish-speaking customers were being served by the bilingual and knowledgeable volunteers. The Houston representatives said that this was model site that could be an example for customer service in Houston – great kudos for the Department of Community Initiatives, which manages the operation, and the Bazan Library for its welcoming accommodations.

#### **Brook Hollow**

In honor of Women’s History Month, the Women’s History Month Committee arranged for local San Antonio artists to display their work in local libraries. Brook Hollow is hosting Vikky Jones. Her drawings have captured a lot of attention and do a great job of decorating the branch.

Brook Hollow Branch Manager Beth Schorlemer was invited to record one of Texas Public Radio’s “Women’s History Month Moments,” a feature in which local women were invited to identify their role models and share their thoughts on the women in history who have inspired them. Beth selected photographer Dorothea Lange, whose work documented changes on the World War II home front, especially among ethnic groups and workers uprooted by the war.

The Friends of the San Antonio Public Library Board Meeting took place at Brook Hollow on Sunday, March 16.

Tapley Trudell was a presenter for the Big Read Book Group Facilitation Workshops.

As usual, Brook Hollow was a very busy Early Voting site; in fact, it was the second busiest location in the city - and despite the crowds, everything went smoothly.

### **Carver**

Antioch Christian Academy stopped in at Carver Branch Library during the last week in February, approaching staff with interesting reference questions and checking out many biographies. The fourth-graders were gearing up for research papers, while students in the lower grades enjoyed storytime with Children's Librarian Ginger Payne, on loan from Landa Branch Library while that building undergoes improvements. The youngsters impressed the staff with their inquisitive nature. Teachers expressed appreciation for Carver's attentive information professionals and promised to make the branch a regular destination.

Librarian II DL Grant helped organize the Joint Library Workshop, a collaboration of Bexar Library Association, Alamo Area Library Systems, Catholic Library Association, Texas Library Association-District 10, and the Special Libraries Association. Held at the Institute of Texan Cultures on March 1, the event attracted delegates from across Bexar County and from as far away as Del Rio. Delegates earned continuing education credits in topics such as "I Hate Books," which offered tips for children's librarians working with reluctant readers, as well as effective database management.

Carver Branch Library brought Black History Month to a close with an assortment of special programming, including Brazilian *capoeira*, a martial art that has been described as mixture of game and dance created by 16th-century Africans enslaved in Brazil. The demonstration drew an audience of nearly 60 people who were dazzled by the thumping drum beat and the performers' precision twists and kicks that bordered on the acrobatic. Nearly everyone remained afterward for punch and cookies provided by staff. The turnout was also strong for *Dancing through the Journey*, which was presented by The Guardian Angels Dance Studio led Director Ms. Jacquelyn Darby. Visitors jammed the meeting room to watch the young performers celebrate the contributions of African-Americans, which they expressed through poetry, dance and music.

Also during Black History Month, the heritage of the African American in San Antonio was featured in a series of stunning black and white images from a collection on loan from the African-American Genealogical & Historical Society of San Antonio. Visitors patronizing the display were able to see the proud, thriving community African-Americans carved out for themselves over a period of about a hundred years. Some of the images included a festive 1870s-era Juneteenth procession, Negro League baseball players from the 1930s and African-American beauty queens taking part in the city's annual Fiesta celebration in the 1970s.

To acknowledge "Women's History Month" Ginger Payne created two juvenile displays: HERSTORY, a display of juvenile fiction with female protagonists, and "Proud to be Pink" a bulletin board and display of children's picture books about girls. These displays are complimented by two displays of books on women's history and African American women.

The arrival of March conjured up thoughts of César Chávez. Librarian II DL Grant served on a committee whose aim was to develop programming ideas to honor the late labor activist and civil rights leader. The committee encouraged each SAPL location to devote no less than two weeks to a display. Staff at G.W. Carver Branch turned its attention to honoring the legacy of César Chávez whose birthday was celebrated that month. The enthusiastic staff created a banner, declaring: "César Chávez – American Hero" while Library Assistant and artist Rosemarie Rodríguez filled the branch display case with Chávez memorabilia and an inviting array of Chávez titles available for checkout. The crowning item in the display was a blazing red flag bearing the symbol of the United Farm Workers of America, the organization with which Chávez was associated. Programming included a screening of the documentary short, *César Chávez*.

On March 5, Public Service Manager Ronnie Delgado reached out to elderly persons in the branch's service area by visiting Normandy Terrace Nursing and Convalescent Center. He carried a bag full of materials and spoke to the enthusiastic group on library services and resources.

Librarian II DL Grant took part in the Library's Big Read campaign, helping tackle the distribution aspect of the project. This included placing SAPL stickers on the backs of hundreds of copies of the book and on reader's guides before they could be sent out to area organizations, schools and businesses.

Library Assistant Rosemarie Rodríguez, a senior at the University of the Incarnate Word, where she majors in art, displayed some of her original paintings in the San Antonio Collegiate Student Exhibition on March 4. The exhibition sponsored by the San Antonio Art League and Museum attracted student artists from colleges and universities across the city. Her work was again featured in the UIW's Senior Art Exhibit on March 24. Ms. Rodríguez will receive a bachelor's degree in May.

Department Systems Aide Matthew Deyo has been invited to join the National Society of Leadership and Success, a collegiate honors organization, as well as Phi Theta Kappa, the international society of two-year colleges. Matt, a sophomore at Northwest Vista College, majors in computer programming.

On March 17, during spring break, KLRN hosted their "Early On" program at the Carver library. PBS characters Super Why and Princess Presto were there to meet the kids. Events included fun learning games, storytime, and free books for all the children present.

"Easter Holiday Crafts for Kids" was presented on March 18 by the Prairie View A & M Extension Service. The craft program was a great way for kids to spend their time off at the library and have fun at the same time.

"The Big Read!" came to Carver in March. On March 19 performers from the Magik Theatre presented a dramatic interpretation of Harper Lee's classic story. On March 22 Carver hosted screening of the film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and on March 25, a discussion of the book.

### **Cody**

VITA tax advising and early voting dominated Cody's meeting room during this month, but Cody's various clubs were still able to hold their monthly meetings. Selections for March were *Page Turner* (film club), *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls (Thursday Book Club), and assortment of stories by Charles Todd (Saturday Book Club) and *Just One Look* by Harlen Coben (Mystery Book Club).

Cody's monthly clubs were spotlighted in the March/April issue of *San Antonio Woman* magazine ("San Antonio Springfest," pp. 85 – 89).

Librarian II Ramona Lucius provided book talks of *Madame Bovary* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* to the residents of the Merrill Gardens Assisted Living Center. Displays have been put up through the Branch, highlighting Women's History Month and the Big Read events.

Children's services staff were kept busy with regularly scheduled storytimes. Library Assistant Trina Smith provided storytime for 68 children from the Fredericksburg II Site of the Parent-Child Initiative Programs. KLRN held one of their early learning reading events at Cody during Spring Break.

The new Anime Club has started out with good attendance. Teens remarked that they like the club's being held right after school at 4:00 p.m. instead of at 7:00 p.m. Club members are also getting more involved in deciding what they want to watch at each meeting. Teens were treated to a *Guitar Hero* competition during Spring Break, with the winner walking away with a giant Hershey's bar.

### Upcoming Special Events

Through April 15 VITA tax assistance  
April 19 Friends of the Cody Library Book Sale  
April 26 Big Read Book Discussion: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

### **Collins Garden**

Statistics for early voting and the primary election indicated that there was an unusually high turnout for this area. According to Children's Librarian Leigh Bedford, who served as Librarian in Charge on election night, "Collins Garden was extremely active on March 4, hosting the area caucus. The building was full of voters, and it was an exciting time for staff. Fortunately, everybody was orderly and all the activity was over at 9:30 pm."

For the first time in a few years, Collins Garden Branch Library is once again a VITA tax preparation site. There has been a steady stream of taxpayers visiting the library to have their taxes prepared for them by VITA volunteers working under the auspices of the Department of Community Initiatives.

Children's Librarian Leigh Bedford has been busy networking with local schools and daycares in the Collins Garden service area. Regular story time visits are now scheduled for Avance Child Care at KellyUSA. Additionally, Leigh has performed story times at a local church's after-school program. Attendance at Collins Garden regular story times is small, but the program consistently receives positive feedback.

Spring has definitely arrived, and Collins Garden has several interesting displays featuring books on gardening and spring holidays.

On March 8, Collins Garden Branch Library was visited by one of the City Manager's secret shoppers in support of the *Customer First Reality Check* initiative. The secret shopper expressed a variety of concerns about the grounds and the exterior of the building. The customer service rating was only "Fair." The manager was asked to submit an action plan to deal with the concerns expressed in the report and a follow-up visit will be made to see how well the secret shopper's concerns were dealt with.

### **Cortez**

Record numbers of voters took advantage of early voting at the Cortez Branch Library, with voters waiting in long lines in order to participate on the last day of the primaries.

On March 6 Palo Alto College students from Central America presented the first in a series of monthly programs for the library. The students are teachers from Central America participating in a program sponsored by the Alamo Community College District and Palo Alto College. The library has partnered with Palo Alto College to present the series of programs. This month's program focused on Guatemala. The lively, well-attended program included a multi-media presentation, song, dance, and an informal question and answer segment.

The Cortez Branch held computer classes March 10 through March 27. Following the scheduled Department of Community Initiatives classes, Stephanie Vásquez, Carol Collins, and Rebecca Johnson presented a series of library-oriented classes. Topics included GoodReads.com, LibraryThing.com, Twitter.com, Flickr.com, ReferenceUSA, Learning Express Library, and Making a Greeting Card.

Staff and volunteers planted four trees on Saturday, March 15. The Cortez Branch and Parks and Recreation partnered their resources in order to plant trees on the library grounds. Volunteers included students from Our Lady of the Lake University's Epsilon Sigma Alpha sorority.

Habitat for Humanity presented a program on their home buying program on March 20.

Family attendance at storytime continues to grow. Thanks to increased staffing Carol Collins has been able to visit other SAPL storytimes to get ideas for ours.

Library Assistant Amanda Hernández created forms to help the staff keep up with patrons' requests for popular new titles as they are released.

Staff shifted paperback romance fiction from spinner displays to regular shelving located next to adult hardback fiction. This arrangement locates all adult fiction and adult genre fiction to one location in the library. In addition, staff shifted easy books in order to facilitate easier access and ease of shelving.

### **Forest Hills**

Patrons have donated many books and media items for the Friends of the Forest Hills Library book sale scheduled for April 9 to 14.

The branch has consolidated and shifted more of the adult collection in order to place similar formats together and have a more logical arrangement for improved customer service.

On February 27 a group of five attended the Embroidery Circle to continue work on their projects.

Keetowah, a group promoting knowledge of indigenous cultures, had 16 members present at their March 3 meeting.

On March 4 the Frosting Creators Cake Decorating Club drew a crowd of 18.

Ralph Thompson was the discussion leader when five members of the Contrarian Viewpoint Book Club met on March 8 to discuss Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*.

The Thunderbird Hills Neighborhood Board of Directors met at Forest Hills on March 11.

The Woodlawn Hills Neighborhood Association March 12 meeting was attended by 24 interested persons who came to hear the guest speaker discuss city planning. A second meeting was held on March 18 to discuss association business.

On March 13 Fred Martínez gave a presentation on revolutionary money of San Antonio and Texas to the History of San Antonio Book Club.

Forest Hills celebrated the Big Read and *To Kill a Mockingbird* on March 19 with a book discussion, and on March 25 with film screening.

In the Children's Department big plans are underway for replacing a tall shelving unit with a shorter one that will allow better visibility in that area. The plan also includes shifting all Juvenile Easy shelving units closer to the wall, yielding a new open area that will act as a storytime location for parents to sit on the bench or rug to read with their little ones.

To promote increased readership of the library's many juvenile paperback fiction series titles, Children's Librarian Marcia Valvo has designed and produced mini-poster with a listing of all paperback series titles, illustrated by familiar color pictures from popular series such as Captain Underpants and Junie B. Jones. The poster is displayed at children's eye level.

## **Great Northwest**

The Great Northwest Branch Library has been busy getting ready for spring. The RFID project is nearly at an end. Patricia King has been in charge of finishing the project, and she and her team of Library Assistants Luanne Bloom, Theresa Brader, and Maricela Martinez have accomplished a lot of hard work. Children's Services Librarian Cari Raley processed most of the easy books.

The branch has hosted two Big Read events. On March 9, the branch presented the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. On March 10, Magik Theatre presented a dramatic interpretation of the book. The Great Northwest Book Group will discuss the book on Saturday, April 19.

Library Assistant Luanne Bloom represented the branch at Burke Elementary School's Parent Night on March 12. The topic was the importance of reading in a child's education. Ms. Bloom shared how the library can be a resource for parents. She provided library card applications, calendars of events, and promoted the upcoming Summer Reading Program.

Twenty teens met for the Great Northwest Young Adult Activities group on March 5. Future plans for the group include a zine (online magazine) and a movie series. Group members plan to write regular articles for the zine, featuring creative writing, reviews, and other things of interest to their peers. The facilitator is Young Adult Librarian Patricia King.

Library Assistant Theresa Brader set up a Women's History Month Display. There are books on alternative therapies, natural medicines, healthy living, natural medicines, disease prevention, and women's health issues. She also has free pamphlets provided by the American Cancer Society.

The branch is exhibiting the artwork of Anna-Marie López de León as part of Women's History Month. The exhibit is part of the library's *Art & Persuasion - the Feminine in Flux* exhibit series. A reception for the artist was held on Saturday, March 8.

## **Guerra**

### Programs and Displays

Guerra continues its regular programs. Book club leader Steve Jackson is working towards increasing club membership. Children's Librarian Yanira Vegerano-Cruz agreed to hold her Toddler Tuesday programs in the children's alcove since the small meeting room was booked for VITA during Early Voting and Election Day. Everyone in the library enjoyed the antics Yanira's active toddlers.

Guerra's most popular teen program, Game-ra, unfortunately had to be suspended for the month of March due to other demands on Guerra meeting room space. Erich Backhus and Tim Johnson have a full month of teen activities planned to resume in April. A new Teen Book Club will begin the end of March with a four-book vampire series extremely popular with teens, *The Twilight Saga* by Stephanie Meyers. The branch's teen area is being revamped with the addition of new signage, new flyers and pamphlets, and a bulletin board for posting events. Department Systems Aide Erich Backhus presented two programs in celebration of Teen Tech Week, including "Make Your Own MP3's" and "Build Your Own Computer."

Guerra celebrated Women's History Month with an artist installation created by Kimberly Campbell Garza. The installation is part of a project coordinated by Sandra Griffin of Great Northwest entitled *Art and Persuasion: Femininity in Flux*. Ernestina García created a Women's History Month display. Irma Durán from the Women's Business Center presented a program entitled "The Foundations of Starting a Business."

A system-wide celebration of César Chávez included the program "Organic Herbs: Good to Grow," presented by Carole-Lee Fisher, president of the Herb Society. She discussed the culinary and

medicinal uses of herbs. Joyce Anne Stevens created a César Chávez display with emphasis on Chávez's non-violent philosophy and his crusade for better conditions for migrant workers. The historic grape strike was highlighted, with the United Farm Workers flag flying above the display case.

Other displays included a miniature Easter Village donated by Guerra patron Maryanne Elizabeth Sagor. Christine Martínez assembled the display in Guerra's second display case. Ernestina García created a display to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss. Lots of Dr. Seuss books were checked out and the display had to be continually replenished. New Large Print books were moved into the New Book area and have seen a significant increase in circulation.

KLRN presented a Spring Break program, "Super Why!" The event featured activities, books, giveaways, and music, plus the chance to meet Super Why and Princess Presto.

#### Staff and Training

Library Assistant Tim Johnson has only four classes remaining for completion of his M.L.S. Tim attended PubMed training conducted by librarians from the UTHSC Briscoe Library. Joyce Anne Stevens attended Medline training. She also attended a Book Discussion Workshop at Central and will be conducting the Big Read book discussion group for *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

#### Election Day

On Election Day Guerra's door count was more than 4,000. It is estimated that more than 100 people attended the Democratic caucus held after the election. Thanks to Tim Johnson and Steve Jackson, who stayed at the library until 11:00 p.m.

#### Notable Improvements

Library Automation staff replaced all the branch's earlier model Dell computers with a newer version that includes CD ROM drives and USB port accessibility – a total of 20 computers and four scanners.

In consultation with Sprinkle-Robey Architects, Library Capital Projects Manager Rich Walker facilitated design and installation of protective covers to prevent vandalism to the fifteen ground-based spotlights along the front of the library.

#### **Igo**

Igo was proud to host the Masters Leadership Institute's annual alumni meeting on February 26, where more than 100 prominent members of the community met for a catered meeting with guest speakers. A separate group from the City Clerk's office made arrangements to tour the facility and now plan to use the meeting room space for their upcoming City-Council wide meeting. All were extremely impressed with the branch's beautiful meeting room space, and, more important, were extremely complimentary of the service they received from library staff.

The newly formed Friends of the Igo Branch were officially established with the acceptance of their by-laws by the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library on March 16. Staff are very excited to have the dedicated group of volunteers so eager to help make the library even better for all.

Programming continues to grow, both in quantity of workshops offered and attendance at each program. Notably, teens have been arriving in droves for the several programs that have been offered for them, including a Teen Book Club, Dance Dance Revolution session, and the Yu-Gi-Oh Duelist Club. An additional session of storytime has been added to accommodate the ever-growing demands of parents wishing to bring their little ones for early literacy experiences. The children's librarians have also been hard at work researching several ideas for reaching out to special populations and offering new programs at the branch. Both Lisa Taylor and Cheryl Sheehan have been in contact with community members, teachers, and librarians from other states in seeking input and best practices for the concepts.

Librarian Haley Holmes has been providing training for Branch staff in various areas, including proper cash handling procedures, creating lists in Millennium, and others. Branch Services Coordinator Joel Bangilan came to the Branch to meet with staff to share the business philosophy found in the bestselling "FISH" series. Staff is already incorporating many of the concepts of the theory, and everyone is having a great time brainstorming ways to make the workplace more satisfying for themselves and, in turn, library customers.

### **Johnston**

Johnston staff were delighted to welcome new Children's Librarian Karen Sebesta. Karen is a former high school librarian and social studies teacher and is currently an adjunct faculty member teaching an online course in American history at San Antonio College. While she has only been at the branch for several weeks, Karen has already added a second storytime and has begun community outreach efforts. She has also shown that she has a real knack for creating book and media displays, her superb display for The Big Read being a case in point.

Special Assignments Librarian Tracey Knouse has again outdone herself with her display for "Dummies" titles – it's black and yellow and, we hope, will lead to the books being read.

Johnston was also the proud recipient of a \$100.00 donation from PACE (People Active in Community Effort), a neighborhood civic group.

### **Landa**

The Landa Community Gardens project is moving along. On March 13 the committee met and scheduled several days to begin the work. On March 30 the group will meet at Antique Rose Emporium to select plants for the garden. The first day set aside to work in the garden is Saturday, April 5, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

### **Las Palmas**

The Presidential primary election dominated events at Las Palmas during February and March. Early voting numbers exceeded 5,000 participants (second only to those voting at Crossroads Mall). Las Palmas was the background for former San Antonio mayor Henry Cisneros, who held a February 18 press conference urging voter participation. His rally for Senator Clinton on February 23 caused a traffic jam and some library user complaints regarding the lack of parking, but everyone remained calm and LIC Karen Michaelson was successful in getting drivers to move their cars so that traffic could move smoothly once again. Sheriff's deputies assisted with directing traffic on the last day of early voting.

Based on early voting participation, staff expected that voting numbers on March 4 would also be high. On Saturday, March 1, a sign was posted on the library doors, reminding library users that Election Day traffic was expected to be congested, and urging them to consider visiting Las Palmas on another, less hectic day. Still, there was a steady stream of customers during the day, and Internet users on site until closing.

Voter traffic on Super Tuesday was steady, peaking, as expected, after 5:00 p.m. Officers from Edgewood ISD and SAPD were on hand to ensure that traffic flowed as smoothly as possible. Staff had identified areas in the library and in the patio area for the caucus participants to meet, and had set out extra chairs. By 7:30 p.m., 161 voters had overflowed into all areas of the library (but none in the patio, which had been set aside for the Republican Party caucuses). When the last voter finished up the process at 8:30, the three Democratic Party precinct delegates convened their caucuses. While there was discussion, no tempers flared, and the process proceeded in an orderly fashion. Manager Rebecca Alvarez and Librarian Gina Brudi secured the building at 10:45 p.m. As always, this was a team effort. All full-time staff signed up to arrive early, cover nights, and stay late on

weekends during Early Voting and on Election Day. Thanks also to Building Custodian Larry Navarro, who adjusted his schedule to maintain the building and the restrooms the night of March 4.

Was it the "Now that you've voted...sign up for a San Antonio Public Library Card!" sign that got customers into Las Palmas and in the know about programs? The Las Palmas staff thinks so! An audience of 28 (a much higher than usual total) enjoyed the March 11 St. Patrick's Day Family Fun Time story hour and craft presented by Gina.

Gina's outreach to AVANCE Early Head Start this month included visits to four classrooms. She read stories and presented songs and flannel board stories to two- and three-year-olds in four classrooms (total of 40). She also left a total of 60 books (via the Outreach Cards) for classroom use.

An audience of 8 participated in the Young Adult César Chávez program held March 8.

Las Palmas staff welcomed Department Systems Aide Michael Gutiérrez, and Circulation Attendant Luís Ramírez to the branch the week of March 3. Michael comes to SAPL from the Alamo Area Community College district and Luís joins Las Palmas from the Pan American Branch.

While Las Palmas recruited for a Department Systems Aide, Circulation Attendant Patricia Perez served as the branch liaison to Automation. She assisted customers and staff, resolved hardware and software problems, and assisted in the installation and implementation of the branch CMS system. Library Assistant Beatrice Canales also served as a "technology go-to" staff member while on duty during the weekends and nights. Thanks to both Patricia and Bea for their teamwork and commitment to customer service.

Professional staff took the opportunity to review and change branch magazine subscriptions, with a critical eye to incorporating new titles of interest to all members of the Las Palmas community. Magazines of interest to tweens and teens were added, including titles on the topics of self-image (*Latina*), anime (*Shojo Beat*), gaming (*Games for Windows*), sports, skateboarding, and wrestling. Under the heading of General Interest, staff chose *Every Day with Rachael Ray*, *Family Circle*, *Prevention*, *Men's Health*, and *Woman's Day*.

Beatrice Canales participated in the March 7 webcast presentation of the "Library Spaces: Future Needs" continuing education event. The discussion centered around making the most of current library spaces.

Department of Community Initiatives VITA coordinator Victor Ayala will be using the Las Palmas meeting room through April 14 to meet with site coordinators on a weekly basis.

On March 10, City Asset Management plumbers completed repairs to the toilet in the ladies' handicapped public restroom. The first plan called for bringing in a jackhammer to break up the floor tiles (to allow the fixture to be re-set), but a way was found to complete repairs without any damage. COSA electricians expected to complete the replacement of all burned-out lights in the front patio area and on the outer perimeter of the building by March 14.

### **Maverick**

In spite of the heavy usage of the meeting room by VITA services and Early Voting, most of Maverick's regular groups have shown great flexibility and resourcefulness by meeting in other parts of the library. Staff were able to find space for reading clubs, chess clubs, knitter, writers and needleworkers.

The VITA volunteers continue to be very busy, with lots of customers still needing tax assistance. Early Voting was extremely busy at Maverick. Election Day was very long, but staff found it rewarding and exciting. Maverick staff relied on their usual sense of humor and positive attitude to help all the participants find a way to finish their tasks.

Maverick's Big Read event, hosted by Derika Bailey, was well received and appeared to please the attendees. The movie and book discussion was lively and entertaining for all.

### **McCreless**

The main event in March at McCreless was the election. The branch had tremendous turnout for early voting and was the third busiest location in the City. On a single day more than 700 people voted. On the last day of early voting Librarian Monty Holcomb was at the branch until 11:30 p.m. Election Day went smoothly, and the caucus process was not as drawn out or contentious as shown on the nightly news at polling sites. Staff were able to leave by 10:30 on election night.

In addition to the well-attended regular storytimes, Children's Librarian Beverly Bixler also took her act on the road to Highland Hills PCI on March 13. Beverly also presented a special program on the *Captain Underpants* series of books on March 19.

During Spring Break week McCreless did some special programming including a visit from KLRN with the "Super Why" costumed character. To tie in with the "Mirth Month," the Academy Awards, and Spring Break, the branch held its first movie night on March 19. The crowd enjoyed *Pirates of the Caribbean* along with popcorn and bottled water provided by the Friends of McCreless. The branch also had a popular book display with books about movies and movie stars during the month of March.

The McCreless Friends held a one-day book sale on March 17.

McCreless added two new staff members in March: Dina Hernandez and Yvonne Zamora, both Circulation Attendants. McCreless staff member Blanca Hernández was promoted to a Library Assistant position at Pan Am.

The display case for March featured "Signs of Spring," which included flowers, plush lambs, rabbits and ducks from the collection of Branch Manager Cammie Gunter.

### **Memorial**

#### Outreach and Programming

Children's Librarian Sheila Acosta visited Madison Elementary to promote Dr. Seuss's Read Across America Day, reading to classes from kindergarten through first grade. On March 3, whole families were invited to vote for their favorite Dr. Seuss books. Election voters on March 4 joined in on the fun. Surrounding elementary schools were visited to promote Memorial's programming for March, particularly Spring Break.

March was the Big Read. Ms. Acosta visited Memorial High School and Jefferson High School's Freshman English and AP History classes to promote the chosen title *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Librarian I Maria Stroligo hosted a *To Kill a Mockingbird* movie and book discussion. All events were very successful.

#### Special events

Memorial was a voting site on March 4. The library hosted over 2,000 voters, with many staying for the caucus.

San Antonio artist Mira Hnatyshyn-Hudson displayed her works in conjunction with Women's History Month and *Feminine in Flux*. Her display was enthusiastically received and a reception was held in her honor.

Memorial hosted Spring Break Movie Madness showing *Pirates of the Caribbean I, II, and III*.

An art workshop for teens with Xavier Garza was held during Spring Break to celebrate César Chávez Month. The workshop was promoted to the public as well as through classes at Memorial and Jefferson High Schools with an enthusiastic reception.

The second annual Easter Egg Hunt for Family Fun followed one of Memorial's storytimes with a huge turnout!

The first-ever Family Game Night was held with families enjoying Monopoly, Scrabble, Clue, Stratego, and many more board games.

Teen Time programming included a chess challenge and resulted in the formation of the branch's first-ever Teen Chess Club.

A series of basic guitar classes conducted by Moisés Hernández, sponsored by the Memorial Amigos and funded by JPMorganChase, is back by popular demand. Scrapbooking has also returned.

#### Displays

Memorial's displays continue to rock the library. This month's included one for the Big Read, César Chávez Month, Women's History Month, "Branchappenings" events for children, teens, and families, a beautiful Spring Storytime Tree, and an Easter / Spring Storytime display promoting Memorial's spring events and family fun nights.

#### **Pan American**

The Wednesday ABC Club continues to attract new children. On February 27, 29 children studied the letter U with stories and crafts "Under the Sea." For the letter V, "Vegetables and Vultures," the following week, there were 42 participants. The letter W featured whale stories, paper bag whale puppets, and wings on March 12. During Spring Break Week, the March 19 event was a special ABC Club Easter party.

Monday's Family Fun Time has had similar success. On March 3, six participants enjoyed the theme of "when a monster is born." To celebrate César Chávez Month, a Bexar County Master Gardener brought plants and potting soil to Family Fun Time on Monday, March 10. Eighteen children were able to learn some things about plants and gardening and potted their plants to take home. A few plants that were left over were planted in one of the planter boxes outside. More fun was had on March 17, Spring Break Monday, and on Easter Monday.

Little Read Wagon finished its weekly "Para los niños" series with a "self esteem" session on March 4, and "loving limits" on March 11. These classes proved so popular that an additional hour was added to provide sufficient time for all interested.

The adults were not left out. Every Monday evening there are free T'ai Chi classes, which are not only maintaining their numbers but are also drawing new guests to the library. Two groups of AVANCE parents were given tours and issued library cards. Special programs for adults also included a Habitat for Humanity program on March 6; "Water Wise Gardening" on March 11, and a film screening about César Chávez's life and work on March 16.

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

The Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School had several special programs during the last month. The library hosted a "Lost" party where library customers met in the library before the program for pizza and soda. The group watched the television show and discussed the program during the commercials. All age levels enjoyed an origami program presented by Carol Johnson on March 4. The library had displays of origami books that the participants checked out after the program.

The Bannwolf Library is hosting a chess club for all age and skill levels of players. The club meets every Monday at 6:00 PM. There is an instructor and the players have access to instruction and helpful tips during the hour of play.

The library had two library practicum students working to complete the requirements for their Master's Degrees. The two students worked nights and weekends. Each presented a storytime and directed crafts during Family Fun time on Saturdays. Participants were excited to see the puppet show they presented.

### **San Pedro**

There were four Young Adult programs during this time period. Arts and crafts were created at each program, including decorating a treat bag and making knot bracelets. The last program in March was also a meeting of the Graphic Novel Book Club. The book chosen for March was *Kitchen Princess, Vol. 1*, which was well-received by the teens.

The theme for San Pedro's recent storytimes was "Things That Go," and children loved singing and acting out the "Driving the Fire Truck" and "Wheels on the Bus."

Four B.A.C.K.Pack (Books and Crafts for Kids) programs designed for elementary school children were presented. Each program begins with a story read out loud together by Children's Librarian Betsy Dalton and the children, followed by a craft or activity. Crafts included making a freedom quilt from different strips of construction paper, and a dog puppet to accompany *Dot the Firedog*.

On February 25 and March 5, the Hawthorne Academy Lunch Bunch book club met. The book read by the 17 students was *No Talking*. The students discussed the book using only three word sentences as prescribed by the book. *The Ghost's Grave* will be the book read in March.

Betsy traveled to the Kenwood PCI on March 6 to present storytime to three classes, with a total of 33 students. Ten books for each classroom were also delivered for use during the next month and the prior month's books were picked up.

On March 10, Betsy visited San Antonio College's Child Development Center to present storytime to 22 students, members of two classes. Ten books were also delivered to each class for their use during the month. The teachers and students really seem to enjoy the visit.

In early March, the inaugural issue of *News Flash!*, a bimonthly newsletter by and for child and young adult patrons was published. It was available by email and in hard copy at the branch. The Children's Librarian and the children and young adult patrons filled the newsletter with reports on various activities at the branch and patron reviews of books. The newsletter was well-received and customers are looking forward to May's issue.

Readers Inc., the branch book discussion group, met at the library on March 1.

### **Semmes**

On February 29, Semmes became the fifth SAPL branch to proudly fly the American and Texas flags outside the building. District 10 City Council Representative John G. Clamp was the master of

ceremonies, during which he honored a constituent, World War II and Korean War veteran Linsey Sammons, who began the campaign to install the flagpole. The ceremony featured the James Madison High School Color Guard and the National Anthem, sung by SA Firefighter Nathaniel Batson. Kendra Trachta, Beth Graham, and Rich Walker represented Library Administration; several of Semmes' Friends were also in attendance.

In anticipation of The Big Read, three Semmes staff attended a workshop given by Barbara O'Hara and Tapley Trudell on facilitating book groups. Debye Nicholl, Randi Jones and Oscar González all learned new techniques to guide their respective book groups. Oscar is coordinating outreach to the Legacy Senior Apartments; he has delivered large print copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to the location on O'Connor and will participate in their book discussion in April.

Randi's book group held its discussion on March 3.

On March 8 the Semmes meeting room was a busy place. Deborah Keller-Rihn, the artist whose work is currently on display at Semmes, gave a workshop for elementary students, sponsored by Blue Star Art Center. Attendees created a mandala, which means "circle" in Sanskrit. Basically, it is a pattern created on a surface with sand and then washed or wiped away. As the weather was beautiful, the workshop was mostly held outside.

On the same day, Malcolm Beck presented a program on pesticide alternatives for the garden, as part of the library's celebration of César Chávez.

### **Thousand Oaks**

On Friday, February 29, a forest grew in the library. The Thousand Oaks Branch was approached by the City's Parks and Recreation Department to help with community activity, planting ten trees at the VIA bus stops in the neighborhood. The branch's role was to serve as the drop-off point for all the materials (mulch, shovels, etc.) and ten trees. The trees were placed around the branch so the customers could enjoy them for the day and find out what the City had planned. On Saturday, twenty volunteers from Madison High School, along with supervisors from Parks and Recreation, met at the library to pick up the trees and shovels and head out into the neighborhood to plant them.

In celebration of César Chávez, Barbara Kwiatkowski designed an attractive display in the foyer, depicting Chávez's life and accomplishments. In conjunction with the celebration, Adult Services Librarian Jorge Chávez arranged a program about "going green" in your garden. The program was presented at the branch on Sunday, March 2, by Malcolm Beck. Mr. Beck is an organic gardener and a local author who wrote the books *Texas Bug Book* and *The Garden-Ville Method*. He gave the audience tips on using insects as pesticide alternatives in gardens.

The "Chatterbooks" program for school-age children continues to meet weekly with a core group of nine children who attend regularly. Barbara Kwiatkowski is the monitor for this weekly children's book club, which just finished reading and discussing *Ballet of the Elephants* by Leda Schubert.

Thousand Oaks Branch was busy on Election Day, March 4. In the back of the library, VITA was preparing tax returns for citizens and in the meeting room citizens were busy voting in the primary. When the doors opened at 7:00 a.m. for voting thirty people were already in line. (The first citizen to vote arrived at the door around 6:15 a.m. with her chair, newspaper and a cup of coffee.) After the election ended the caucus began, attended by 150 very involved citizens who didn't finish up their debate and polling till after ten o'clock. This should have ended the election activities but there was a problem with the count and election officials called the Library Director at 1:30 am and said the Thousand Oaks Branch needed to be reopened so the count could be re-tallied. Branch Manager Christine Palmer went back to the branch allow the technicians to return. Election activities finally ended around 3:00 a.m., finishing up a very interesting and busy day.

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

In February, the Friends of the Tobin Library at Oakwell held their most successful quarterly book sale ever. Even though not long ago they first broke the \$2000 mark in receipts, their total fell just short of \$3000 this time around. The Friends' most recent funding contribution was for a set of magazine covers that look very attractive on the shelf and facilitate maintenance of the collection.

The final two pieces of the branch renovation fell into place in March. The carpenter delivered a custom-built table which will house the computer terminals for sign-up for public computers. It matches the two other custom pieces that he previously built for the branch, as does the new rolling, spring-loaded cart that was specially designed to fit under the Return Desk to catch materials slipped through the "Book Return" slot.

After the very heavy turnout during early voting, the turnout on Election Day itself was surprisingly light. The caucuses brought out a large group of voters, as expected, but the crowd of nearly two hundred worked hard to complete the unfamiliar process. All in all, it was a memorable and exciting night.

The branch was delighted to welcome four new staff members in February and March.

### **Westfall**

Computer classes continue to be very popular at the branch. Many patrons took advantage of the classes offered during the last weeks of February and the first week of March. Classes for beginners like "Meet the Computer" proved to be the most in demand. Good attendance was also reported for the more advanced classes covering Word and Excel.

Westfall Branch was a polling day site for the March 4 primaries. According to the local Elections Judge, turnout was very high. Branch staff that worked Tuesday evening saw more than 200 citizens enter the library to take part in their precinct caucuses. Many of the caucus goers arrived early and had to wait until after 8:00 pm to begin caucusing. At Westfall, the caucuses lasted until about 10:20 p.m., at which time staff members Jamie Flowers and Theresa Ybarra closed up the branch and headed home. It was a very interesting and exciting night.

The afternoon of March 4, Westfall Library was host to one of The Big Read events. Harper Lee biographer Charles J. Shields spoke to a group of about twenty interested persons. After his talk, he answered questions from the audience and stayed to sign copies of his book. Special thanks go to Librarian I Monica Garza for driving Mr. Shields to the program and for setting up the space for the program.

To celebrate César Chávez Month, Westfall hosted a program entitled "Organic Herbs: Good to Grow." Patrons were invited to come and learn about how herbs are cultivated and how they can be used for culinary and medicinal purposes.

The Friends of the Westfall Branch Library held their quarterly meeting on March 11. San Antonio *Express-News* reporter Scott Huddleston was the guest speaker. During the meeting, the Friends discussed the purchase of items from the Westfall staff wish list. The Friends also chose a date for their next book sale, to take place on June 7.

During the month of March, the branch became the Command Post for the Dellview Area Neighborhood Sweep. Citizens living in the Dellview area were able to come to the library and communicate their needs to the City's Special Projects Coordinator Domingo Portillo. Many citizens in the area took advantage of this special service.

Librarian I Monica Garza represented Westfall Branch Library at the grand opening of District 1 Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros' field office on March 15. At the event she presented Councilwoman Cisneros with a copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.