

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

**Administration**

**Director's Office**

Completion of the Library's proposed Fiscal Year 2008-2009 budget and final negotiation on the Interlocal Library Services Agreement with Bexar County have taken priority over the past month. On July 9, Library Director Ramiro Salazar, Assistant Library Director for Support Services Aubrey George, Acting Assistant Director for Public Services Kendra Trachta and Fiscal Planning Manager Kathy Donellan met with Deputy City Manager A.J. Rodríguez and representatives from the Office of Management and Budget to review the Library budget. The Library's budget request was presented to City Manager Sheryl Sculley on July 16.

The capital budget has been developed on a separate schedule. Ms. Sculley has scheduled a meeting of the City's management team and department directors on July 21 to review the entire capital budget.

Discussions between Bexar County representative Dr. David Morgan and Mr. Salazar have led to the development of a proposed library funding formula and additional provisions to the Interlocal Library Services Agreement. Those additions were presented to the Library Board Planning Committee on July 17 and will be presented to the full Library Board of Trustees at their meeting on July 23.

On July 3, Mr. Salazar met with Capital Improvements Management Services Director Mike Frisbie and Finance Director Ben Gorzell to discuss funding options for the Central Library weatherization project. The consultant's recommendation regarding abatement of the water infiltration problems at the Central Library was presented to the Library Board Facilities Committee on July 17 and will be presented to the Library Board on July 23.

Mr. Salazar, Mr. George, Ms. Trachta, Senior Management Consultant Jessica Ramos and Public Relations Manager Beth Graham attended the Library Advocacy Committee meeting on July 14. Ms. Brady will report on the activities of the Advocacy Committee at the upcoming Board meeting.

New Deputy City Manager A.J. Rodríguez has assumed administrative oversight of the library. On July 10, Mr. Salazar hosted Mr. Rodríguez for an introductory meeting with the Library's management team.

Planning is underway for the new District 3 Branch Library. On July 15, Mr. Salazar met with area stakeholders, and later that evening with the District 3 Neighborhood Advisory Committee to provide general space allocations for the new branch library.

At the July 11 meeting of the Library Foundation's Latino Leadership for the Library Committee, Mr. Salazar, Ms. O'Hara and Ms. Ramos presented the library's proposed Chicano Renaissance Retrospective program for Hispanic Heritage Month 2008. The L<sup>3</sup> Committee expressed enthusiasm for the library's plans and committed to raising funds to support the program.

Mr. Salazar attended the Urban Library Council and American Library Association annual conferences in Anaheim, California, June 25 through June 30. Board Chair Jean Brady and Library Foundation President Kaye Lenox also attended the ULC conference. While at the conference, Mr. Salazar seized the opportunity to meet with Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*, and

invite him to make a presentation for the Library during his visit to San Antonio in August. Mr. Mortenson has agreed and will speak at the Carver Community Cultural Center on August 29. Branch Services Coordinator Barbara O'Hara coordinated the details of the agreement.

On July 7, Mr. Salazar attended the Texas Library Association Annual Assembly in Austin, participating in a meeting concerning the TexShare Databases, and meeting with State Librarian Peggy Rudd.

A news conference is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on July 24 at City Hall to kick off District 8 Council Representative Diane Cibrian's "Read for the Gold" Olympic Reading program, which will feature regular blog items from San Antonio Olympian Josh Davis.

### **Branch Services**

Branch Services Coordinator Joel Bangilan met with Memorial Branch Manager Melva Ramirez to discuss plans for the Community Fair to be jointly hosted by the Memorial Amigos and the City's Department of Community Initiatives in September.

Barbara Celitans [*Administration*], Didi Morganti and Andrew Jung [*Central Reference*] represented the library at the Houston Street Festival on June 28. In addition to providing material on Library resources and the Summer Reading programs, they assisted the Federal Communications Commission agents in distributing information on the 2009 change over to Digital TV.

The Library Department's participation in the COSA Summer Blood Drive was outstanding. On Monday, June 30, 52 staff, representing 11 Library Branches, responded to the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center's S. O. S. (Save Our Summer) call for donors. Central Library Auditorium served as the location site for the blood

Branch Services Coordinator Barbara O'Hara conducted FISH customer service training for McCreless staff on June 26 and intellectual freedom training during orientation for new library staff on July 8.

Under Ms. O'Hara's coordination, planning is underway for Hispanic Heritage Month 2008. The theme selected is the Chicano Renaissance Project, recognizing the growth of Chicano literature, art and drama in the 1960s and 1970s. As well as library staff, seven community members are serving on the organizing committee. Several community organizations, including the Centro Cultural Aztlán, the Institute of Texas Cultures, the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, have also agreed to partner with the library on this project. Events planned so far include an art exhibit featuring works by major artists such as Jesse Trevino, Mel Casas, Kathy Vargas and Carolina Flores; panel discussions; author readings; musical performances; film screenings; and live theatre. These will all take place during the months of September and October, and includes all branches as well as Central Library. The art exhibit will open on September 3, with a reception and music by the Latin Legends.

Following up on a suggestion by Board Chair Jean Brady, Ms. O'Hara contacted Trinity University, which led to contacts with representatives of author and activist Greg Mortensen to negotiate an appearance for the library during his visit to San Antonio in August. Mr. Mortenson's presentation will take place at the Carver Community Cultural Center on August 29.

With initiation of the pilot laptop checkout program nearing, the Branch Services Coordinators and other members of the public services team are creating policies and procedures for this new service.

### **Children's Services**

Summer Reading is in full swing at all San Antonio Public Library locations. As of July 17, over 19,000 children had joined the Summer Reading Club and were busy reading and recording titles. This year's registration figure exceeds that of 2007 by roughly 15%. The number of children to actually reach the 15 book requirement and turn in their reading logs, thus completing the program, is not yet known. However, by using last year's completion percentage as an indicator, the library can reasonably expect to provide almost 8000 children with a Reading Club certificate and a free paperback book. The library's supply of Summer Reading give-away books was supplemented this year by a generous donation from Scholastic Books and an additional \$3000 in purchases underwritten by the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library.

Summer programming draws to a close at the Central Library on August 2 with the annual children's party, SummerFest. Activities for children and families begin at 11:00 a.m. and continue until 3:00 p.m. Virtually all of the members of the children's services staff will be on hand that day to assure that kids from across the city have a great day at the library.

The library's collaborative Summer Olympic reading initiative will kick off on August 4 and 5 with send off events for former Olympian Josh Davis. These events will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the Cody Branch Library and the Central Library respectively. The "Read for the Gold" Olympic reading blog launches on August 8. For a sneak peek at this initiative, visit [readforthegold.blogspot.com](http://readforthegold.blogspot.com).

With grant funds from both AT&T and HEB, the children's librarians are currently working to revitalize the juvenile paperback and beginning reader collections. Working cooperatively with the Collection Development Department, children's staff will expend approximately \$45,000 to get fresh copies of popular series and classic readers on the shelves. Ordering will be complete by July 31 with books on the shelves in time for the back-to-school rush.

### Little Read Wagon

While school is out for the summer, Little Read Wagon is busy preparing for the fall and presenting workshops for teachers. All Little Read Wagon staff have also had the opportunity to serve in the Central Library Children's Department.

On June 26 Corinne Sánchez and Julia Lazarin made presentations at the Region 20 Early Childhood Conference, which drew a combination of child care providers, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, and individuals working with the early childhood community at the district and regional levels. Ms. Lazarin also represented the library at ChildSafe's Well Child Mini-Conference on July 12. The session was entitled "Building Bonds through Books." Ms. Lazarin emphasized the importance of book-sharing with young children as a means of building relationships, soothing, and a positive form of interaction.

### **Public Relations**

The July 3 visit of the C-SPAN Election 2008 bus was extremely successful. The bus received visits from Congressman Charlie González, State Representatives Ruth Jones McClendon and Joe Fariás, State Senator Jeff Wentworth, and District 8 City Council Representative Diane Cibrian. Deputy City Manager A.J. Rodríguez, Library Board Chair Jean Brady, and Library Advocacy Committee member Yvonne Katz also stopped by. The event was covered by KENS-TV/Channel 5 and KTSA News Radio.

Public Relations Manager Beth Graham has been working closely with the Library Foundation to publicize many of their upcoming initiatives, including receipt of the most recent Laura Bush/IMLS "Librarians for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" grant and grand openings for the *Winds and Words of War* and *Letters to Sala* exhibits in the Central Library Gallery. A news conference with Mayor Phil

Hardberger and County Judge Nelson Wolff has been scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on July 31 at the Central Library to announce the IMLS grant.

Ms. Graham has also been concentrating on publicity for the Chris Jordan *Running the Numbers* photo exhibit at the Central Library August 3 through August 29. This exhibit, a cooperative project with Texas Public Radio and the Southwest School of Art & Craft, has begun receiving media attention. An opening reception will be at the Gallery on Sunday, August 3, and Chris Jordan will appear in person at the Memorial Auditorium on August 6.

On July 17, Mr. Salazar and Ms. Graham met via conference call with James Keller, Marketing Director for the Queens Public Library to discuss the Queens Library marketing plan and obtain Mr. Keller's advice and recommendations on development of a library marketing plan. Mr. Salazar had attended Mr. Keller's presentation during the ALA Annual Conference and initiated the contact as a result of that discussion.

Graphic Designers Ana Farr and Tiffanie Wilson designed and produced posters, flyers and stickers to support Council Representative Cibrian's "Read for the Gold" Olympic reading program. They printed posters and distributed them throughout the system promoting Sandra Cisneros' upcoming Macondo Workshop for writers. Both designers are concentrating on the redesign of the library calendar of events, which is scheduled to premiere at Staff Development Day.

### **Teen Services**

Teen Services Coordinator Jennifer Velásquez has been appointed to the City's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Task Force, part of the Metro Health Department's Project WORTH initiative. The goal is to study and ultimately reduce the teen pregnancy rate in San Antonio.

Ms. Velásquez has been invited to make a presentation during the American Library Association/Young Adult Library Services Association program at the REFORMA National Conference in El Paso this September. REFORMA, an affiliate of the American Library Association, is committed to the improvement of the full spectrum of library and information services for the approximately 56.2 million Spanish-speaking and Latino people in the United States. Ms. Velásquez will discuss reaching Latino and Spanish-speaking teens with new and alternative media.

Teens around the city continue to register for eco-summer 2008, the Teen Summer Reading Program. As of July 17, 3,810 teens had registered for the program and 1,441 teens had attended teen summer programs. All library locations continue to host weekly teen programs, including video games, crafts and presentations from various local environmental and wildlife organizations. In keeping with the summer eco-theme, the July system-wide craft is a beaded bracelet using hemp cord. Craft kits containing the bracelet materials were distributed to all of the branches.

Each library location received a special gift to kick off Summer Reading: a Sony PlayStation 2 and either Dance Dance Revolution or Guitar Hero video games. The video games were funded through the annual gift from the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library to support summer reading, and library staff throughout the system send their thanks. Game Fest on August 9 will round out the summer's activities for teens.

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

From the suggestion box at the **McCreless Branch Library**: "Don't change anything you all do at this library – all of you do excellent work." – **Bob Guajardo**, June 12



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

MARY ALICE P. CISNEROS  
CITY COUNCILWOMAN  
DISTRICT 1

June 4, 2008

Mr. Ramiro Salazar  
Director  
San Antonio Public Library Department  
P. O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283

Dear Mr. Salazar:

It has been brought to my attention that some employees at the Central Library were mentioned during a City Council meeting earlier this year. Mr. Robert P. Ritterbach spoke during the Citizens to be Heard segment of the meeting and noted that Dan Stanford, Adam Spana and Rolf Laun were to be commended for the outstanding work as City of San Antonio employees.

I would also like to thank Messrs. Stanford, Spana and Laun for their conduct and professionalism on the performance of their duties.

Mr. Ritterbach has requested that his favorable comments regarding these employees be considered and acknowledged at the time of the employees' performance ratings.

Sincerely,

Mary Alice P. Cisneros  
Councilwoman, District 1

Cc: Dan Stanford  
Adam Spana  
Rolf Laun  
Robert P. Ritterbach

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"...you guys have a great library system here in San Antonio – I'm retired military and I have seen quite a few library organizations. Thanks." - Paul Oncale, **July 9**

### **Central Library**

#### **Alamo Area Library System**

The Alamo Area Library System offered a very successful two-day course in Photoshop for its members and will offer a follow-up course in August. AALS technical staff are installing network control software in 38 libraries under a Gates grant. Work continues on the new Web site, and some staff are scheduled to attend training on the Joomla content management system.

Assistant Coordinator Vivienne Beckett is leaving AALS in order to move closer to her family in Missouri.

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

Summer visitors to the Central Children's Department are arriving in droves! To date, almost 1,400 children have joined the Summer Reading Club at Central with 16% of those already completing the fifteen-book requirement. Central's Summer Programming has also been popular with a total of 131 attending Spikey Mikey's Magic Show and 122 singing Texas Tunes with Purly Gates.

Central Children's staff is happy to report that all print materials on the third floor have now received RFID tags. This was a big project that included not only tagging 64,000 items but a careful look at individual books for possible weeding and/or replacement. The RFID project on the third floor continues with audio visual materials as the next collection to be tagged.

### **Circulation Department**

The Central Circulation Unit is working with Technical Services on the new telephone notification system for holds and overdue items. The initial tests have gone very well and staff anticipate a noticeable decrease in postage costs when the system goes live. Jody Hampton [*Central Reference*], Martha Knott [*Technical Services*] and Carla Conrad [*Circulation*] have worked together to make this service a reality.

Until that time Circulation will continue to produce the overdue, hold notice and bill mailers for San Antonio Public Library. For the month ending June 2008, the Unit transmitted 39,007 overdue/hold/bill notice electronic mail messages. Additionally, 24,421 overdue/hold/bill mailers were printed and processed. The task is accomplished through the teamwork of the entire circulation staff.

Three Millennium Circulation Training classes were conducted during this reporting period with 22 staff members attending. Of those, 18 will be assigned to a branch library, and the remaining four will hold various positions at Central Library.

### **Reference Department**

On Saturday, July 12, Cynthia de León and Elma Nieto-Rodríguez hosted a book reading and signing by author and professor Manuel H. Peña. The program kicked off with a lively performance by students from Conjunto Heritage Taller. More than 40 audience members enjoyed excerpts and reminiscences from the author's latest work, *Where the Ox Does Not Plow*.

The Reference Department is assisting the Collection Development Department until the department supervisor position left vacant by the retirement of Robert Beebe can be filled. Reference staff are more actively involved in the purchasing process, ordering adult fiction and audiobooks as well as materials to support a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Carmen Roja and Pannaga Prasad organized a program entitled "College Prep and Scholarship Tips for High School Teens and Parents." More than 80 attended the program presented on June 21 by Nippy Betz, Director of EmPowerment 21, a San Antonio non-profit agency.

### **Technical Services Department**

The Technical Services staff welcomed back Barbara Lujan, Library Assistant, to the Cataloging Unit. The staff also said farewell to Robert Beebe, Collection Development Manager, who retired at the end of June.

Texas Women's University library student Rosie Amaya completed her practicum in the Technical Services Department on July 3. Her schedule allowed her to observe and participate in the department's workflow from the selection process through distribution of the processed items. The TWU faculty advisor was pleased that Rosie met all of the goals that she set for this practicum series.

On July 14 and 15, four librarians from the Tulsa City-County Library visited the San Antonio Public Library to observe RFID setup and procedures. The Tulsa City-County Library signed a contract with 3M for RFID and wanted to talk with staff in branches and Central about the tagging and RFID experience. They visited the Cody Branch Library to see RFID in full operation, including the self-check-out, self-service holds, and digital library assistant use. They visited the Tobin Library at Oakwell to observe the tagging process.

Technical Services Supervisor Martha Knott worked with Central Reference Librarian Dianna Morganti to develop a Downloadable Media committee. The purpose of this committee is to select downloadable audiobooks, videos, ebooks, and music from Overdrive; develop a marketing plan; and update the Overdrive information on the library's website. Besides Ms. Knott and Ms. Morganti, the committee members are Leslie Elsasser [*Central Children's Department*], Jody Hampton [*Central Reference*], Deborah Nicholl [*Semmes*], Michelle Ricondo [*Igo*], and Maria Stroligo [*Memorial*]. The committee met on July 16 and received training on using Overdrive's Marketplace website to select new titles and create usage reports. The members also determined their selection specialties (i.e., children's, young adult, film, music, etc.).

Katie Enright presented a Create List class on June 19.

Innovative Interfaces trainer Aleona Nova presented a 2-day training session on the acquisitions module. The training focused on a review of the order record set-up, fund codes and fiscal closing, claiming/cancelling orders, and statistics. Martha Knott, Margo Guzman, Nohemi Lopez, Lucia Silva, Charlotte Balusek, Kellie Hight, and Letty Alonzo attended the training.

Martha Knott attended the TLA Awards Committee meeting in Austin on July 9.

## **Teen Services Department**

### Weekly Programs

**Mondays with Violeta Garza, new Teen Services Librarian:** As usual, the first Monday evening of the month was home to the well-attended Guitar Hero tournament. Teens were able to choose a competitive level, from easy to expert, enabling them to show off their skills while not feeling overwhelmed. Guitar Hero open-play for teens takes place every Monday at two o'clock.

**Tuesdays with Kathleen Fordyce:** Teens have fun playing Dance Dance Revolution every Tuesday at two o'clock. The game gives teens a good workout too, as they quickly step in time to the moving arrows in the game. The San Antonio Vegetarian Society gave a presentation to sixteen teens about vegetarianism and its positive effects on the environment.

**Wednesdays with Sylvia Pachecano:** Library Assistant Sylvia Pachecano has been presenting a Teen Eco-Summer Movie Series, featuring movies with an ecological theme. The month of June featured *Duma*, *The Bear*, *The Amazing Panda Adventure* and *Two Brothers*.

On July 5, Ms. Pachecano's Anime/Manga club featured Bob Olsen of the Japan/America Society, who demonstrated *ikebana*, the Japanese art of flower arranging. The flower arrangements are on display in the Teen Services Department.

**Thursdays with Regina Almanza:** Every Thursday at two o'clock Ms. Almanza offers crafts for teens. July crafts have included making jewelry, cards, bubble magnets and sand art.

On Fridays, teens play board games, such as Monopoly, Jenga, Scrabble and Sorry.

### Outreach

Kathleen Fordyce visited the UTSA Downtown Campus on July 8 to speak to middle and high school students enrolled in the Pre-freshman Engineering Program (PREP). Kathleen talked to 180 students about the resources the Library offers, as well as programs and services available in Teen Services at Central and around the system. In addition, the students registered for the Library's teen eco-summer program. On July 10, Kathleen visited the San Antonio College campus to speak to 120 PREP students. These students registered for teen eco-summer as well.

### **Texana/Genealogy Department**

Frank Faulkner was the guest speaker at a meeting of the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society on June 21.

A group of parents from Lanier High School toured the Central Library on June 26. Texana/Genealogy staff demonstrated how the collections could be used by students.

The *San Antonio Express* published an article about Texana/Genealogy on July 9.

Matt DeWaelsche and Andrew Crews represented the Library at the local archivists meeting on July 10.

### Archives

Processing of former Mayor William Thornton's papers and creation of a finding aid for the collection have been completed.

The archives of the Woodlawn Camera Club have been placed in the care of the Texana/Genealogy Department.

New items were donated to the Symphony Archives by Lois Oppenheimer and Mrs. Louis Bishop.

Additional gifts have brought the African-American Funeral Program Collection to a total of 2,258 items.

### **Web Services**

The Web Services department continues to develop new ideas and pages for the web redesign project. Over the past few weeks, staff have been working on a directory page that will allow patrons to quickly get the information that they need to access Library departments, services, supporters, and administration. New pages to assist users with researching answers to common problems and other frequently asked questions are also under development.

Julia Selwyn and Juanita López are moving ahead with the use of Flickr online photo sharing. They have worked to document the photo posting process, guide users through the necessary steps for uploading their photos, and organize the photos once they are loaded. During a Council of Library Supervisors meeting, Julia presented the Flickr tool to branch managers and provided everyone with a Flickr F.A.Q. (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet so that the information can be shared with employees. Flickr, along with other online tools, can be greatly used to enhance the Library's presence on the Internet. Because marketing is everyone's responsibility, staff are encouraged to participate at all levels.

## **Branch Libraries**

### **Bazan**

Through July 31, the Bazan Branch Library is hosting an exhibit of paintings by members of the Texas Pastel Society. On July 12, artist and Pastel Society member Mary Lopez demonstrated the technique of pastel painting to Library patrons.

The branch is currently in partnership with the non-profit organization *Academia America* to present combined citizenship and civics classes. The bilingual classes, which began on June 24, are open to legal immigrant residents and so far have attracted 15 students. The branch is using its resources of ESL and U. S. history and citizenship materials to assist the students. Branch staff expect that the numbers of students will continue to rise as people become more aware of this opportunity.

### **Brook Hollow**

Thanks to the efforts of temporary staff members Yvonne Beltrán and Alison Recendez, Brook Hollow RFID tagging is almost complete.

The branch's kitchen renovation is complete. Special thanks go to the Friends of Brook Hollow Branch Library, who provided new countertops, refrigerator, cabinets, microwave, sink, and even a fresh coat of paint. It's an amazing transformation.

Adult Services Librarian Tapley Trudell attended the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim and has accepted the position of Chair of the Planning Committee for ALA's New Members Round Table.

Green Spaces Alliance installed a temporary art show called "The Picture Your World Youth Photography Project" which is still being enjoyed by Brook Hollow's staff and patrons. It is one of Green Spaces Alliance's numerous programs that promote community awareness.

Brook Hollow continues to be a site host for several Extreme Target Sweep programs provided by San Antonio's Housing and Neighborhood Services Department. Most recently, local police officers and other city employees provided fingerprinting and safety awareness information for parents and children. As their city web site states, the program's purpose is to "strategically enhance the quality of life in San Antonio neighborhoods through the development and delivery of revitalization programs and services leveraged by dynamic partnerships."

Both the children's and teen reading programs have had impressive enrollment and completion numbers so far. Activity attendance is very high with numbers edging over 100 for some programs. The adult reading program also continues to be very popular. Adults are turning in book reviews every day to be eligible for the bi-weekly prize drawings.

### **Carver**

Summer events at the Carver Branch Library have proved to be popular with customers, driving up average attendance figures by as much as 50% for some programs. The most noticeable jump in attendance was seen at Summer Cinema, which struggled to draw a consistent audience its first few nights. However, screenings of features such as urban dance documentary *Rize* and the hit comedy *Daddy Daycare* helped the program catch on with customers, bringing up the attendance numbers.

Life Synagogue, an educational program aimed at the whole family, attracted about 30 customers to its presentation on nutrition. Young people's programs also saw increases. For example, Wednesday afternoon B.A.C.K. Pack, the summer offering for school-age children, featured special presentations, such as Magik Theatre, Ranger Tom and singer Purlly Gates, and drew sizeable crowds. Interim Children's Librarian Amy Williamson reported an increase in Carver's storytime attendance, with as many as 50 children and adults packing the meeting room.

The arrival of Play Station 2 at the branch offered yet another opportunity to reach out to the public. Activities were built around Guitar Hero video game, delighting the young, and in some cases those not so young.

Staff remained committed to outreach, making two presentations at the Dorie Miller Recreation Center. The Library Foundation's Omar Berrios partnered with Carver Adult Services Librarian D.L. Grant in an effort to further spread the word about the library's two summer reading initiatives. Nearly 70 youngsters signed up. Amy Williamson was pleased to speak to the children at the Boys and Girls Club about the Summer Reading program at the invitation of Gloria Malone, member of the Library Board and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

The Carver staff thanked the Friends of Carver Library to know that with a luncheon was held in their honor to say thanks for all of the support they provided throughout the year. Among the guests were Carver Friends President Dorothy W. Smith, Friends of San Antonio Public Library President Linda Nairn, FOSAPL Treasurer (and former Assistant Library Director) Nancy Gandara, and Library Trustee Gloria Malone.

### **Cody**

Summer Reading has been a success. As of mid-July almost 1,000 children had signed up. Staff have noticed that more juvenile and young adult fiction items have been circulating this summer.

In addition to regularly scheduled storytimes, Cody has offered several well-attended programs. On June 26 storyteller Purlly Gates entertained 68 youngsters with tales and songs of Texas and the West. On July 3, Ranger Tom spoke to a group of 50 about the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. On July 10, almost 150 children and parents showed up to hear Susan Frigge share interesting facts about spiders and snakes. Many brave children were able to meet and touch a snake. On July 17, a large crowd greeted the Pirate Players, who told stories and led everyone in sing-alongs. Many children dressed up as pirates for the program. Family Movie Days on Wednesday has been a huge hit with families. Films presented include *Ratatouille*, *Alvin and the Chipmunks*, *Nancy Drew*, *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* and *Shrek the Third*.

Cody's regularly scheduled clubs held their monthly meetings. Selections included: *Hud* (Film Club); *Water For Elephants* by Sara Gruen (Saturday Book Club); *The Memory Keeper's Daughter* by Kim Edwards (Thursday Book Club) and *Fyre Mirror* by Karen Harper (Mystery Book Club). The Desert Rain poetry group met to share their poetry and discuss writing poetry.

Teen Triathlon Tuesday is still seeing good attendance, as participants test their skills against one another in the video games Mario Kart, Guitar Hero, and Dance Dance Revolution. All participants are anxious to show that they are number one in their favorite video games.

#### Upcoming Events:

- July 24 Donnabelle the Clown
- July 26 Grant Seeking for Schools, Churches, and Nonprofit Organizations
- July 29 Teen Tuesday: Dance Dance Revolution and Mario Kart
- July 30 Family Movie: *The Bee Movie*
- July 31 "Bugs, Bugs, Bugs," presented by the AgriLife Extension Program
- August 4 Olympic Send-Off for Josh Davis
- August 5 Teen Tuesday: Guitar Hero & Mario Kart
- August 6 Family Movie *Enchanted*
- August 11 Elvis Night

### **Collins Garden**

Children's Services Librarian Leigh Bedford reports that summer reading is winding down at Collins Garden; however, thanks to the efforts of the entire staff, participation has been high and reactions have been positive. Crafts programs have included paper plate snakes and paper boots, and children have learned lots of Texas information, presented during story times and B.A.C.K. pack (Books and Crafts for Kids) programs.

To give rambunctious children something to do and to lower the noise level in the library, Library Assistant Carlos Loera gave them some paper to draw on and a craft project to make---decorating a paper cutout of a flip-flop. Later, as he was walking around the library, Carlos noticed a toddler trying to put the flip-flop she had made on her foot.

Collins Garden staff members are taking an inventory of the Spanish-language collection and weeding damaged and outdated materials to prepare the collection for RFID conversion. Additionally, new titles have been requested to fill gaps and to strengthen offerings.

Teen Services Liaison Carlos Loera continues to report strong participation in various teen activities and programs, with Guitar Hero still generating the highest attendance. On Tuesdays and Thursdays Carlos continues to offer teens a chance to play board games, complete craft projects or draw. He also encourages those waiting for a turn on the computers to read the newspaper, a magazine, or a book. All of his efforts to keep the teens engaged in constructive activities has helped to reduce the noise level in the branch.

The response to this round of computer classes at Collins Garden Branch Library has been moderate. However, while the class laptops were here, Carlos Loera used them to show teens various Internet sites of interest to them.

The Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas has a collection of nature photographs from the *Picture Your World Youth Photography Project* on display at the branch.

Adult Services Librarian Amy Cline has created a series of book displays on the subjects of weddings, Texas, mysteries, and crafting, which have been well received by customers browsing the collection.

The newly established Friends of Collins Garden Branch Library are preparing for their first book sale, which will take place on Saturday, July 26, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### **Cortez**

The July 1 salsa dance class was a hit with Cortez Branch patrons. The Thursday Night Family Movie Series in July included *Jason and the Argonauts*, *Fly Away Home*, *The Three Musketeers*, and *The Journey of Natty Gann*. The weekly Guitar Hero program continues to gain popularity with teen patrons. Adolf Torres from the Housing and Neighborhood Action Services Department of the City of San Antonio presented a very well-received program about the City's Homebuyers Incentive Program.

Nearly seven hundred children have registered for the Summer Reading Program. As of July 10, 2008, Cortez had twice as many children registered for the Summer Reading Program as in 2006 (the library was closed in 2007 for renovations). The Magik Theatre, Reading in the Rainforest and Ranger Tom programs had average audiences of 86.

## **Forest Hills**

The Summer Reading Program continues to be a huge success this year. As of July 16 there are a total of 1,060 teens and children registered in the program. Branch Manager Roberto Zapata has assumed responsibility for children's programming until a new Children's Librarian arrives.

Mr. Zapata attended the ALA Annual Conference, during which he completed his term on the Caldecott Committee, which each year selects the recipient of the Caldecott Medal, given to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.

The Friends of Forest Hills Branch Library met on June 26 and approved a proposed spending plan.

Keetowah, a group promoting education and knowledge of indigenous cultures, had seven members present at its July 7 meeting to discuss participation in upcoming events.

The Thunderbird Hills Neighborhood Association Board of Directors met at the branch on July 8.

Ralph Thompson was the discussion leader for the July 12 meeting of the Contrarian Viewpoint Book Club, which featured Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*.

The origami club met on July 22.

Children's programming continues to focus on storytimes and B.A.C.K. Pack story hour. In addition, several performers entertained the children. On July 2 Ranger Tom from the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park made a presentation to 31 people. The following week, Mark Sheperd entertained 79 guests with his Go Wild! Reading in the Rainforest performance. Regular storytime was held each week and had a total attendance of 67 parents and children in three weeks. Teen programming continues as well. Department Systems Aide Matthew Deyo hosted the first meeting of the anime club. The three teen programs held during this period had an attendance of 37.

## **Great Northwest**

In honor of summertime grilling, cook and baking, Adult Services Librarian Sandra Griffin and Library Assistant Christina Reedy organized the first Great Northwest Homemade Pie Contest, held on June 28. There were a dozen entries, including mango and apple pie. The winning pie was chosen by three judges – a former Navy pastry chef, a forensic scientist and a manager from the neighboring Chase Bank location. The first prize was awarded to nine-year-old Caitlin who baked Black Forest Cherry Pie. The second and third prizes were given to "Delicious Apple," and "Peach Pie." Prizes and pies were generously donated by Las Palapas, the Gourmet Dog Bakery, and HEB. Bill Miller Barbecue also donated a dozen pies for all who came. Library Assistant Christina Reedy publicized the contest with a baking and grilling book display throughout the month.

The "*Siempre Salsa*" dance classes, which will be offered through August, continue to be very popular with customers. Between ten and fifteen couples have attended each session which will continue through August. The branch thanks the Great Northwest Library Friends for their financial support for the classes.

The Great Northwest Summer Reading Club has been very well received by the community this summer. It is truly because of exceptional and hardworking staff. Children's Librarian Cari Raley challenged branch staff to create a wide variety of experiences for children and families. They responded to the challenge:

Children's Librarian Elspeth Blakeman presented programs for the "Little Wranglers," featuring songs, stories, and puppets. She continued her outreach to neighborhood daycares.

Library Assistant Benjamin Castañeda has put together a puppet workshop series for older children and their families. During their sessions, they learn about puppetry skills and make different kinds of puppets and a puppet stage from a cardboard box. His students will present a puppet showcase in August.

Library Assistant Luanne Bloom and her group have offered Reader's Theater programs. She has received raves from the audience for her fabulous artwork and props for the theater programs and puppet shows. The children are excited and look forward to reading their lines with Luanne's props. She has truly made their experience magical.

Library Assistant Theresa Brader developed the "Buckaroo Camp" idea for the younger children. In addition to stories the children have taken part in bronco bustin' relays, longhorn roping, barrel racing, wagon pulling, and walking the trails while they are Reading Across Texas.

Library Assistant Maricela Martinez planned and presented a square dancing series for elementary school children. She trained several teen volunteers to help with the squares. The fun, laughter and music leak through the door of the meeting room. Staff are frequently heard answering questions about that program for patrons who immediately sign up for the next open square.

The branch would also like to thank the many volunteers who helped with the execution of these programs. Many have worked behind the scenes, keeping up with the books, DVDs and CDs that have been checked out over the summer. Branch Manager Diane Backhus extends the thanks of the entire staff to everyone who has made this Summer Reading Club experiences one of the best ever.

The rest of the staff have been kept busy issuing and updating hundreds of library cards. The arrival of CMS in May has made the summertime easier in some ways. The staff enjoy "subs and sundaes" on occasional Mondays to celebrate the great success

Adult Services Librarian Sandra Griffin has a one-woman art show, "All the Things that Go to Make Heaven and Earth," on exhibit in the Central Library Gallery this month.

### **John Igo**

Igo's monthly door count continues to increase steadily. Igo's Thursday B.A.C.K.pack programs have been so well attended that it has been necessary to issue advance tickets for crowd control. The July 17 program included "Snakes Alive!" guest presenter Susan Frigge, who brought live snakes for the children to experience, and stories and craft by Children's Librarian Cara Waits. Gaming on Tuesday afternoons has brought many teens to the library. The program features Guitar Hero, Dance Dance Revolution, and Rock Band on a rotating basis.

Adult programming has also been popular this summer. The "Write Where You Live" series presented by Laura Stephens concluded on July 12 with a workshop on creating settings to do the heavy work so the story's characters don't have to. The branch is partnering with Richard Alvarado to offer monthly Latin dance lessons. Patrons love the classes, which are expected to continue into the fall.

The Friends of Igo Branch Library had their second mini book sale on July 19 featuring paperbacks and children's books. This enthusiastic new Friends group has grown to 26 members.

The staff of Igo and the Friends of Igo came together on July 21 for the branch's second staff appreciation luncheon. Certificates highlighting spectacular performance were given to each employee, and everyone made use of the beautiful outdoor space by playing croquet and bocce ball on the lawn outside the meeting room.

### **Johnston**

San Antonio's Silver Stars WNBA team honored a young Johnston patron as a special reader at the branch on July 22. The event included visits by Silver Stars team members who read and talked about the importance of books, signed autographs, and, of course, introduced the winner.

Library Aide Stephanie Espinoza, a library veteran of more than six years, will make July 18 her last work day at the Johnston Branch. She will be moving from San Antonio and pursuing a career in the medical field. She was a valued employee and she will be missed by all who knew and worked with her.

Department Systems Aide Danny Alvarez staffed a library information table at Councilman Philip Cortez's birthday party/community fair at the Miller's Pond Community Center on the evening of July 8. He gave away posters, library brochures, and a stack of library card applications to a teacher.

### **Landa**

Two months after reopening, Landa Branch Library is having a phenomenal summer. Attendance for teen and children's summer programs is up, as is the number of daily visits to the branch. So far 119 teens have signed up for the teen summer reading program, and 727 children for the children's summer reading program. B.A.C.K.Pack programs Spikey Mikey and Magik Theater were a great hit with young audiences and the combined attendance for both programs was 105. Attendance at Wednesday storytimes has increased so much that the branch is now offering a second lapsit story time on Mondays in an effort to ease the overcrowding at the Wednesday session. On July 16, children were delighted by the musical program "Farm Fun" presented by the Jensen Yamaha Music School; a total of 87 children attended the two performances. The Tuesday afternoon teen program has also been a big hit this summer. On July 15, 15 teens attended the jewelry-making program, and a total of 54 teens attended programs during June and July. The average daily door count for the branch is now between 400 and 500 customers, a definite increase over the number of average visits before the library closed for renovations in May 2007.

### **Las Palmas**

Staff have been busy handing reading certificates to over 140 Las Palmas readers, as well as continuing to register new summer readers. The classes visited by Children's Librarian Gina Brudi at AVANCE, Good Samaritan, Madonna, and St. Jude also completed their certificates.

Ms. Brudi continued her outreach to area centers: nine visits to 2-5 year olds at Good Samaritan (113 children); 45 children at Mirasol PCI; 38 3-4 and 6-12 year olds at Madonna; and 2 groups at St. Jude Summer Camp (38 children).

Tuesday Family Fun nights have been very well received, especially those presented by special guests. Magik Theatre actors treated an audience of 72 to the tale of the "King of Texas", and puppet master Mark Shepard presented his Rainforest stories to an audience of 60. The B.A.C.K. Pack series had an audience of 25 for a bluebonnet program and 15 for "boots".

Teens are enjoying the weekly Dance Dance Revolution program presented every Thursday afternoon. Since the program premiered on June 19, Teen Services Librarian Heidi Novotny has enjoyed spending time with this core group of five as they fine-tune their dance moves, or just hang out with their peers. The program presented by Animal Care Services on the June 28 drew an audience of 7, and 9 teens decorated tote bags with an eco theme.

Librarian I Karen Michaelson's book group met in July to discuss Philippa Gregory's *The Other Boleyn Girl*.

Branch Services Coordinator Joel Bangilan visited Las Palmas on June 16. Staff enjoyed his visit, taking the opportunity to discuss various issues with him.

### **Maverick**

Summer Reading is still the main focus for Maverick staff. Amy Roberts and Esperanza Sonnen hosted the Spikey Mikey program with attendance in excess of 300 and Magik Theater, which brought in over 200. The B.A.C.K.Pack programs have drawn an average attendance of about 50 people per program. The teen programs are seeing steady attendance as Derika Bailey has been inspiring area youth to participate in the various programs and the ongoing teen book group. The enthusiasm of the branch's customers has been rewarding for the staff, and confirms that Maverick is really reaching out to its neighbors.

The Ladies' Choice and Wednesday Book Clubs are maintaining a steady and enthusiastic membership. The branch's other sponsored groups (Knitters, Chess Club, Fiction Writers and the Needlework Guild) also continue to show steady attendance.

Texas Pastel Society member Mary Lopez demonstrated how to work in pastels by completing a painting in the branch's public area, which took the best part of a day. The Society has also allowed the branch to continue to display some of their work. Other special programs included money management, ukulele classes, piano classes, a showcase for small business and a visit from some snakes.

### **McCreless**

Wednesday night movies at McCreless have continued to be a success with the films *Ratatouille*, *Enchanted*, *Shrek the Third* and *The Bee Movie* being featured in the last six weeks.

Children's programming averaged almost 50 people per event in the last month. On June 16 there were 68 attendees for the entertaining presentation by Magik Theater. On July 8 Mark Shepard entertained 72 children and adults with his mix of songs, science, and a live praying mantis.

As of July 13 McCreless had 661 children register for the summer reading program and 89 have received certificates of completion.

On July 9 the branch had their most successful Young Adult program ever with new Library Assistant Tricia Masterson leading 26 dancers and "watchers" in the stimulating challenge of Dance Revolution.

### **Memorial**

Summer programming has been a huge success at Memorial. Movie-time Thursdays and snake and turtle Tuesdays bring in families in numbers of 70 or more. Hands-on experiences mean that children take home special memories that will last a lifetime.

Hispanic Heritage Committee members Sheila Acosta, Children's Librarian, and Jimmy Jimenez, Adult Services Librarian, continue to work diligently to reach deadlines to make this year's occurrence a special set of events.

Outreach continues to daycare centers and preparation is beginning for school visits.

The Memorial Amigos/Friends of the Memorial Branch Library are preparing for fall events including their Fall Book sale and Literacy Fair in partnership with the City's Department of Community Initiatives. Three computers purchased with grant funds procured by the Amigos have arrived and Branch Manager Melva Ramirez is working with Department Systems Manager Raymond Fraga to

have them installed in the near future. Grant funds from the Amigos continue to supplement special events at Memorial.

The Memorial staff has been working at other library locations to fill in at locations that are short of staff. Some of those assisting are Melva Ramirez at Landa, Johnston, Cody, and the bookmobile; Sheila Acosta at Landa; and Susan Francis-Maldonado at Cody.

### **Pan American**

The summer programs are bringing the children and their families into the library. On June 26, there were 45 attendees to see "Waynetta and the Cornstalk" at the Puppet Party. The children made stick puppets of Waynetta and the Giant to take home. At the June 30 Family Fun time, there were 58 participants in the "T is for Texas" program. Every letter of the alphabet was printed on paper and placed on the wall. The children had to name something that began with each letter that had to do with Texas, then they made their own large decorated Texas maps. On July 2, a puppet show, "The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse," puppet show was presented to 68 attendees. The children made masks of the town mouse and the country mouse to play with at home. On July 3, 25 people viewed the puppet show "Cindy Ellen," a Texas version of Cinderella. Everyone made a fancy sequined spur like the one that Cindy Ellen lost at the party, instead of a glass slipper. The rainforest was the theme for the special program on July 7 when Mark Sheperd presented Go Wild! with Reading to 65 participants. On July 9, 53 children enjoyed the puppet show "The Toad, the Grasshopper and the Rooster." Following the program the children made moveable jointed frogs. On July 10, another 53 children were in attendance at the "Tres Vacas" puppet show. Children's Librarian Raissa Marking offered a Readers' Theatre production of "Tacky the Penguin" on July 14. Both children and adults were the narrators, creatures, and hunters as they read and acted the script for the 60 attendees. Following the Readers' Theatre presentation, they shared the story of the Great Texas Hamster Drive. On July 16, the puppet show "The Little Fishies and the Big Bad Shark" was enjoyed by 60 children and their adults, and the children made fish mobiles as the craft project. The "Stable Fella" puppet show was scheduled for Thursday, July 17. Participants made a fancy sequined cowboy boot. For the July 21 Family Fun program the theme was "Bluebonnets."

Special recognition for helping with all this programming should go to Children's Librarian and script writer Raissa Marking, Adult Services Librarian James Laferla, Library Assistant Melissa Carroll, Library Aide Laura López, volunteer and UNT graduate student Mary Spears, and Branch Manager Sherri Kyle. Everyone has pitched in to help make these programs happen, while others are taking care of the customers, computers, and other library activities.

The teens are also enjoying the summer sessions of guitar hero and crafts. On June 25 and July 2, twelve teens played games, including Guitar Hero. On July 9, 16 teens made bead bracelets.

The Monday evening Tai Chi classes continue to be popular. Average class attendance is fifteen.

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

The staff at the Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School has enjoyed working with children, teens, and adults during summer programming at the library. Between 75 and 150 children enjoyed B.A.C.K.Pack activities weekly. The Magik Theater performance had the largest attendance. Teens have enjoyed Wii gaming and adults have been involved in salsa dancing and book clubs.

For the first time the library offered a Spanish storytime for our young customers. The attendance was small, but everyone enjoyed having books read in Spanish. The staff will offer this program again before going back to school year hours.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan designated July as National Ice Cream Month. In honor of this month, customers visiting the Bannwolf Library on June 21 were treated to free ice cream

compliments of Blue Bell Creameries. For about an hour between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM customers enjoyed an ice cream sandwich to cool them off on a hot afternoon.

The staff at the Bannwolf Library has asked their customers to fill out a survey about programs they would be interested in having at the library. The staff has received an abundance of responses and is now working on developing programs to begin in September.

### **San Pedro**

Children's Librarian Betsy Dalton performed offered on-site storytimes and delivered books to two classes at the VIA Child Development Center, three classes at the San Antonio College Child Development Center, and one class at the Kriterion Montessori School Summer Camp.

Over the past month fifteen students from JOVEN, students from San Antonio College's Summer Bridge Program, and a group of early elementary students from Kriterion have toured the branch. Special storytimes were given to the SAC Early Childhood class of three-year-olds and to a group from the Kriterion Summer Camp program.

The Thursday evening chess club continues to draw a small group of enthusiastic players. Department Systems Aide Alejandro "Hondo" Aguilar coordinates the event.

On July 8, Library Assistant Cynthia Cruz hosted the branch's second evening of knitting and crocheting. Six patrons attended and were enthusiastic about regularly participating in this monthly event.

During early July the library installed new shelving on the children's side of the library. It has an oak finish to go with the existing décor. The shelving is wider; to better accommodate the many oversize children's books, and it has other features which will allow younger patrons to browse and select items with greater ease.

Student Melissa Doran is spending some time volunteering in the library this summer. She is assisting the Children's Librarian with craft and programming preparations.

### **Semmes**

The Blue Star Contemporary Art Center has displayed the work of another local artist on the walls of the Semmes Branch. Rolando Briseño, who was named Contemporary Artist of the month by the Office of Cultural Affairs and who is the author of a soon-to-be published work entitled *Moctezuma's Table*, gave a lecture in the library on Saturday, July 12, on the topic of the cuisine of pre-Columbian Mexico and Meso-America. Following the lecture the Blue Star hosted a reception in Mr. Briseño's honor. Mr. Briseño's work will remain on display at Semmes until September.

Semmes' computer classes in collaboration with DCI are up and running this month. They will continue through July 24. Students will be learning about e-mail, Excel and Web basics.

On July 7, Semmes staff hosted a picnic lunch for the Friends of Semmes Branch Library and other volunteers. It was fun to share some "downtime," get to know each other better, and extend the staff's thanks to the volunteers for the contribution they make.

### **Thousand Oaks**

Tuesday afternoon Ranger programs have had four programs from the Institute of Texas Cultures that have delighted and entertained the children and adults attending. The first program covered dinosaurs and the children were intrigued by the many figurines depicting the different dinosaurs and reproductions of a fossil dinosaur egg and fossilized "dinosaur poop." The second program covered the life of a cowboy in the Old West. The third program, which was one of the favorites, was about

pioneer children used for toys. The presenter brought stick horses, cornhusk dolls, wooden tops, homemade marbles and many other toys. At the end of the program the presenter invited the kids to all come up and touch and play with the toys. The last presentation taught the children what a one-room schoolhouse would be like. The presenter dressed like an old fashion schoolteacher and had the children act as if they were the students. These programs have been very educational and entertaining. The Ranger program has consistently drawn attendance of 30 to 40 people.

Mark Shepherd presented his Go Wild! with Reading program on July 9. He demonstrated a variety of scientific experiments but children were especially excited about watching a soda bottle explode in all directions. They also were wide-eyed while Shepherd showed them how centrifugal force works as he swung a pail of water in a circle. He completed the show with a praying mantis and puppets.

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

It's been a wild summer at the Tobin Library at Oakwell. With Landa reopening just as school let out, staff wondered if it might be a somewhat quieter summer than last year; but if anything, it has been busier than ever.

The automated computer sign-up system CMS also arrived with the summer. Though the time-saving elements are obvious, many customers remain on the uphill edge of the learning curve and require extra instruction, and circulation staff find themselves issuing many additional library cards.

After a vacancy of over six months, the branch was delighted to welcome new Children's Librarian Debra Bryant for the final few weeks of Summer Reading. The branch and community owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Ginny Hurt, who as a part-time Library Assistant has shouldered the entire slate of storytimes and B.A.C.K Pack events during this period, all prepared with great love, care, and enthusiasm. Ginny also initiated a monthly Family Fun program in the spring that will resume in September.

Summer programming has been very well attended, as always, with the Snake Connection winning out as the top draw so far. The Summer FilmFest has attracted a regular audience on Monday afternoons, made possible by the purchase of a projector with funding from the wonderful Friends of the Tobin Library at Oakwell.

### **Westfall**

Late June and early July have been full of different programs for Westfall patrons to enjoy. On June 27, Boots McPherson came for a visit from the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center. Boots gave a presentation on the history of blood transfusion and the importance of giving blood today. Two programs were presented on July 2. Teens were invited to hear a presentation by an Alamo Area Naturalist. It was also classic movie night, featuring *Charade* with Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant.

Westfall's children were entertained by two great programs on July 3 and July 10. Magician Spikey Mikey entertained with tricks and illusions and Ranger Tom from the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park came to explain the importance of the Missions. Teens came to the branch on July 9 for a Dance Dance Revolution competition. Everyone is really enjoying the new video game system.

The week of July 14 was Westfall's "Salute to Animals." The animal fun began on Monday with a screening of *Finding Nemo*. On Saturday, July 19, the Snake Connection visited the branch and gave families the opportunity to see reptiles up close and personal.

In staff news, Adult Services Librarian Monica Garza had the privilege of attending the ALA Conference in Anaheim. She had a good time and brought a lot of knowledge back to the branch. Library Assistant Theresa Ybarra continues her work as co-chair of the Staff Development Day committee. Adult Services Librarian Lucy Green has been keeping the branch display case full of her

stuffed animal collection. Last month she showcased dogs and cats; this month the focus is on birds. The children really enjoy looking at the animals and picking out their favorites.