

From the Library Director

Sandra Cooper

In early 2007, the issue of safety and some undesirable patron behaviors at the Library hit the front page of the *Press Democrat*. What was not emphasized in the press was that the Library had already begun months earlier to research and discuss how to resolve these issues. This year, to respond to people's concerns, we have taken concrete steps: In July, the Library Commission and staff contracted with a security service for the Central Library in Santa Rosa; and on September 5, we adopted a new behavior policy—*Standards of Behavior*.

In revising the previous behavior rules, the staff had two key objectives: (1) to provide an option for stronger enforcement in place of the current requirement for three warnings and (2) to add unacceptable behaviors that have become a problem in recent years.

The Challenge

In working to resolve the issue, the Library's leadership faced several challenges.

One challenge for any public library is to balance its role as a uniquely democratic institution open to all with the need to maintain an environment that is pleasant and safe. For this reason, the focus of any policy must be on behaviors that are not appropriate in the library setting.

A second issue is that the role of the public library in our communities has changed. No longer are public libraries quiet cathedrals—they are high energy gathering places for the community to exchange ideas, attend programs, and use the Internet, as well as find a good

book to read or do research. New public library buildings cope with these competing roles by providing quiet spaces, study rooms, enclosed rooms for teens, and other areas that accommodate the many faces of the public library in the twenty-first century. Unfortunately, all but one of the Sonoma County Library's 11 buildings were built before the year 2000—and most are 20 to 30 years old.

Last, communities today are wrestling with the changes in public policy regarding the funding, care, and treatment of people with mental health issues. Many of the more serious behavior problems facing public libraries are a symptom of a larger problem—limited community resources to support mentally ill individuals and their families.

Next Steps

The Library has begun enforcing the new policy. We will be evaluating the impact of the new *Standards* within the year, and we welcome your feedback.

The new policy is available on the Library's website along with more background information on the process used to develop the new *Standards*. If you have feedback on your experiences at the Library, please use the Library's Comment Form (available at any of the regional libraries).



Library Director Sandra Cooper

Commissioner Melissa Kelley: The Library's Champion Advocate

Library Commissioner Melissa Kelley has been volunteering for libraries since sixth grade, when she shelved books at her elementary school in Winter Park, Florida. "I can still picture where my favorite authors were on the shelves," she said. "I absolutely loved the library."

Today, Kelley is still passionate about books and libraries. She has volunteered hundreds of hours of her time to improve local library services, launch new programs, and encourage both children and adults to read.

"I am always looking for ways to get kids excited about books and reading, and to give children access to books—especially if they don't readily have access to books where they live," says Kelley. "I am working toward the day when every child in Sonoma County has a handful of books to call his or her own."

Kelley, who owns Arcadia Marketing Services, was appointed to the Library Commission this year after serving as president of the Foundation for five years.

"She'll bring new energy to the Commission," said Library Foundation Treasurer Mike Gorman. "She's extremely well organized and well connected. She's good at keeping track of details, but she doesn't lose sight of the forest for the trees. She'll be able to look at the whole system and do what's best for all the patrons of the library. And she is tireless."

Kelley first became involved with the Foundation in 1999, about a year after moving to Santa Rosa. (The Foundation is an independent charitable organization that raises funds and helps promote programs of the Sonoma County Library.)

Little did the Foundation realize at first what a gem of a board member it was getting in Kelley. She has initiated and run many programs, as well as secured funding. For instance, to support programs and buy new materials, she has written successful grant applications and solicitation letters and introduced fundraising events, such as the annual Chocolate Tasting Event at the Rialto Theater.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROL WOOD

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In 2002, Kelley and then-City Councilman Steve Rabinowitsh co-founded *Sonoma County Reads*, a program modeled on "one community, one book" events in towns and counties nationwide. *Sonoma County Reads* is designed to promote community reading and discussion about a single book. Kelley ran the annual program through 2005. She also started an outreach service under which a library staffer travels to YMCA summer camps with books and materials for children who otherwise are not able to participate in the library's Summer Reading Program.

Last year, she initiated a book drive that distributed thousands of books to economically disadvantaged children through the Redwood Empire Food Bank. "I loved working with the Library Foundation," she said, noting that her term on the Foundation board ends this December. "The other board members are dedicated people with whom it's wonderful to work. I found volunteering with them immensely rewarding."

Kelley said she believes strong reading skills are critical for children to succeed in school and later in life. "The programs at the library are essential," she said, "because the children's programs—often through theater, music and other avenues—provide an introduction to reading that can engage children who aren't yet avid readers."

Ancestry.com: A Boon for Genealogists

Howard Young loves the hunt. Over the past 45 years, he has spent many hours searching historical records for the names of his ancestors. "It's fun to document the life of someone who lived a long time ago," Young said.

For Young and other local genealogists, the process of tracking down ancestors became a lot easier this past spring when the Library started subscribing to Ancestry.com, a website that links researchers to hundreds of databases of historical censuses, immigration and naturalization records, court records, military records, transoceanic ship passenger lists, birth and death certificates, and more.

"It's absolutely miraculous what you can find using Ancestry.com," History and Genealogy Librarian Tony Hoskins said. Library patrons can use Ancestry.com free of charge at all libraries in the county. Use of the libraries' public access computers is limited to one hour per day per patron, but patrons who bring their own laptops to the library can have unlimited access to

Ancestry.com during regular library hours. There are also two public access computers located at the History and Genealogy Library in downtown Santa Rosa. There is no time limit for patrons using these two computers.

Hoskins, who teaches genealogy research methods to librarians throughout California, said he is available to teach library patrons how to use Ancestry.com. If you are interested in scheduling a private tutorial with Hoskins at the Sonoma County History and Genealogical Library (located near Santa Rosa Central Library), he can be reached at 545-0831 ext. 562.



Ancestry.com user Howard Young is thrilled with the information he can access.

Interested in learning more about Ancestry.com?
Call Tony Hoskins at the History and Genealogical Library
for a tutorial, 545-0831, ext. 562.

Plans for a New Southwest Santa Rosa Library

Plans for a new library in southwest Santa Rosa are still in the works despite the defeat in 2006 of the state library construction bond measure.

Architects are continuing to develop plans for a facility that would house a library, a community center, and an aquatic center while city and library leaders seek new funding sources for the project.

"Our biggest hope is that a state library construction bond measure will be approved by voters sometime in the future," Assistant City Manager Marc Richardson said. "If that happens, we will be ready to submit our application to the state for funding for the new library."

One of the fastest growing areas of the county, southwest Santa Rosa is predicted to grow to more than

60,000 residents. The closest library is Northwest Santa Rosa Regional Library, which is housed in a small building that's barely adequate to meet the needs of neighbors in its immediate vicinity.

City officials want to build the new library, community center, and pool at Southwest Community Park, a 20-acre park located at the intersection of Hearn Avenue and Silver Spur. A public review process of the proposed design for the new facility will start in the near future, Richardson said.

Meanwhile, city officials expect to move a modular building to Southwest Community Park this spring, and library officials hope to offer programs for neighborhood residents there in the future.

Richardson encourages city residents to contact their state legislators to show support for a future library construction bond measure. "Our strongest virtue is tenacity," Richardson said. "We are going to keep pushing for this greatly needed facility."



Mike Rooney surveys his kingdom.

A Knight in the Stacks

According to his birth certificate, he's Brendan Michael Rooney, aged 87. But at Windsor Regional Library, he's known as Sir Brendan, volunteer extraordinaire.

Rooney, a retired State Farm claims superintendent, was "knighted" at the library several years ago before a crowd of applauding children and parents at a program featuring armored knights from the Society for Creative Anachronism.

Rooney had no idea he was going to be knighted that day when he showed up in his Bermuda shorts to sort donated books. Only when he was summoned to the front of the crowd by the armored knights and told to kneel did it dawn on him what was happening. "They told me to kneel, and I knelt," he recalled. "Then they said, 'Arise, Sir Brendan.'"

Despite his elevated title, Rooney still shows up almost every weekday to volunteer at the library. Some days he even comes by in the morning for an hour or so and then returns in the afternoon to help some more. He had to stop shelving books awhile ago, but he still sorts donated books. And he tries never to miss Story Time, at which he takes photos and blows bubbles for the children.

"I love the children. I make friends with them. In fact, some of them have invited me to their birthday parties," he said with a smile.

Rooney said the library staff and patrons are "a big part of my life," especially since his wife of 61 years died last year.

"If I didn't volunteer here, I think I'd go into a depression," he said. "My loneliest time is when I leave here each day to go home. These people are like family to me."

Windsor library manager Anne Marie Murphy said watching Rooney's face "light up" when children arrived at the library gave her the idea to start a Story Time program at Chancellor Place, an assisted living facility in Windsor. "The program gives the senior residents a chance to interact with children as well as with the children's parents and caretakers," Murphy said. "Sir Brendan helped me get that program going."

Even when Rooney is not volunteering on site, he's often promoting the library. Whenever he goes grocery shopping, he brings along Story Time fliers and hands them out to people with children. "He does outreach for us," Murphy said. "He's really quite a guy. We've gotten attached to him around here."

Volunteer Opportunities at the Library

Think you might like to help out at the library? We need you. There are many ways to volunteer your time and energy.

- Help shelve books. Our need for shelveers is constant.
- Learn to help repair books, clip newspaper articles, and search shelves. We'll train you!
- Become a literacy volunteer, and help people improve their reading skills.
- Help the Library Foundation raise money for library programs and materials.
- Help a Friends of the Library group with book sales and other activities.

For most volunteer assignments, no experience is necessary. To explore these and other volunteer opportunities, call or visit your local library or go to www.sonomalibrary.org and click on "How to help the Library."

SCL Biz: Sonoma County's Business Blog

Are you thinking about starting a business? Or looking for a way to grow an existing business? Just imagine how helpful it would be to have a free and easy way to keep up with business news, find out about business events, and connect to helpful databases and websites.

Well, imagine no more. A trove of business information and resources is available for free at SCL Biz, the Library's first blog. You can access the blog at www.sonomalibrary.org/biz. "We want members of the business community to think of the library as a place they can turn to that will help them start, grow, or manage a business as well as find business solutions," said Reference Librarian Dana Evans, who is responsible for the content of the blog.

"Libraries are trying to change the perception that they are places where old ladies with their hair in buns go around saying 'shh' and the shelves are filled with 20-year-old books," Evans said. "We buy all of the latest business books. We link people with information they need. Why go out and buy a new book when you can borrow it from the library for free?"

Schuyler Jeffries, who chairs the North Coast chapter of Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), which helps entrepreneurs and small businesses, said he tells new business owners to turn to SCL Biz for help from everything to writing business plans to advertising. "It's amazing how many people we talk to who really aren't aware of what resources the library offers them," Jeffries said.




Evans has been in charge of purchasing new business-related books and materials for Central Library since July 2004. She came up with the idea of reaching out to the business community electronically after attending a program at the library for business people and realizing that most of program attendees were unaware of the library's resources. "I was stunned by how many people came up to me and said, 'I never think of the library as a place to go for business help,'" she said. "It became obvious to me that although we have great databases and we spend a lot of

money on the newest books and materials, it's not helpful to the business community if people don't know about it."

Five or six times a week, Evans updates SCL Biz with news flashes, announcements of local meetings, classes and events, links to websites, and descriptions of new business-related books and materials acquired by the library. To prepare the updates, Evans trolls through dozens of local and national newspapers, magazines, and websites. She checks fifteen websites of local Chambers of Commerce and other organizations for upcoming events and announcements. Anyone can sign up for a free RSS or email subscription to keep up-to-date.

Thwart the Grinch!

It comes without packages, boxes, or bags . . .

-  What doesn't come in a box but gives great delight?
-  What can be enjoyed over and over but never used up?
-  What tells the book lovers in your life that you know they are readers and community supporters?



The gift of a donation to the Sonoma County Library!

Think of it: your gift will be unique, philanthropic, and tax deductible . . . all at once. Your book lover will love it!

Once we receive your donation, we'll send you, and your gift recipient, an acknowledgment that a contribution to the library was made in his or her name. And we'll get the gift letter there before the holidays if we receive your donation by **December 11th**.

Don't delay. Send your holiday contribution to the library today! Use the remit envelope or send your contribution to the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation, Third & E Streets, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.



No-Cost Fundraisers Benefit Library

Did you know there are two ways you can financially support the Library—and neither one costs you a cent? One program is eScrip, and the other is GoodSearch.

When customers sign up for eScrip, participating merchants contribute a percentage of all purchases. If you use GoodSearch as your Internet search engine, GoodSearch donates about a penny for every search you do. Both programs require users to sign up for the Library Foundation in order to receive the benefits. When you sign up, each site will ask you for the name of the group you wish to support. Be sure to enter *Sonoma County Public Library Foundation*.

You can register with eScrip at

www.escrip.com

Merchants participating in eScrip include Safeway, Target, Lands End, Macy's, and Eddie Bauer. Some of the restaurants involved are Coco's Bakery, Carrows, and Baja Fresh. Check the website for the most current list of participants.

GoodSearch is on the web at

www.goodsearch.com

After registering, just use the site like any other search engine. GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo, so it provides high-quality results.

Thank you for supporting the public library with these programs!

The Big Read Sonoma County Awards Mini-Grants

The *Big Read Sonoma County* community reading program has awarded grants totaling \$5,200 to local groups and individuals.

The *Big Read* is a program that aims to promote reading and is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts. KRCB Radio & Television, in cooperation with the Library Foundation and Sonoma County Library, applied for and received a grant from the NEA to promote *The Big Read* in Sonoma County. "The idea of *The Big Read*," says Library Director Sandra Cooper, "is to encourage people in our community to read the same book and discuss it. It's a way to stimulate reading *and* to bring the community together."

The grants, ranging in size from \$250 to \$500, were awarded to projects produced by 12 local organizations and individuals. These projects were designed to stimulate public interest in reading Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, this year's selection for *The Big Read Sonoma County*.

"Our hope is that people throughout the community will experience these mini-grant projects and then visit the library, where we have hundreds of copies of *Fahrenheit 451* available," said Melissa Kelley, chair of the mini-grant committee.

The mini-grant projects run the gamut from an interactive board game on censorship to a bench painted by Artstart students; from performance readings of *Fahrenheit 451* to cross-generational reading buddies; and from a Cultural Hit Squad that recites classic works to an art show of transformed "burnable" books.

Some of the mini-grant projects include:

- ✓ The Young Peoples Theatre performance and audience discussion in Cloverdale
- ✓ KGGV-LP 95.1 FM radio programs on *Fahrenheit 451* in Guerneville
- ✓ An art show of works by Analy High School students in Sebastopol

In addition to KRCB, the Library, and the Library Foundation, additional partners in *The Big Read Sonoma County* include the Sonoma County Book Festival, Arts Council of Sonoma County, Charles M. Schulz Museum, Sonoma State University, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Copperfield's Books.

Visit www.bigreadsonoma.com for a complete list of mini-grant projects and additional information.

This mini-grant program is part of The Big Read, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest.

Guerneville's Library Near the River

Tucked beneath a stand of redwood trees along Armstrong Woods Road, the Guerneville Regional Library serves an eclectic mix of river and coastal community residents and summer tourists. As a public library on the Sonoma coast, it's not unusual to find people here from Sea Ranch and Fort Ross who stop by to check out books and videos while they are in town shopping for groceries.

On a recent afternoon, Mardi McKeever and her daughter, Kelilyn, paddled their canoe from their rented vacation house to Johnson Beach and walked the few blocks to the library to use the computer. "The librarians couldn't be more helpful," said McKeever, a Redwood City resident who was spending a week relaxing on the Russian River.

A few feet away, in the neatly organized and cheerful children's area, Guerneville resident Jason Weaver answered email on his laptop while his nine-year-old, homeschooled daughter, Saja, drew pictures with colored pencils. "We make extensive use of the library," said Weaver, who telecommutes to his job as a financial investments reporter in San Francisco. "We'll put 15 books on hold through the library's website, come in and drag them home, and then start the process all over again."

Weaver said he loves the sense of community he gets in the library: "You find the whole range of folks who live in the area here, reading newspapers, dropping off books, picking up videos."

Meanwhile, hunkered down in the back of the small library in a chair among shelves of books,

Maureen Ryan read the latest issue of *People* magazine, which she called "my McDonalds." Ryan, who lives "two minutes up the street" from the Guerneville Library, said she stops by once a week to read newspapers and magazines and sometimes to use the computer.

Library manager Mairi Barsky said the Guerneville Regional Library is small enough that librarians get to know many patrons on a first-name basis. She also said the clientele is diverse in its literary interests. "I try to buy the latest books that would satisfy the reading needs of a very diverse population," she said.

Guerneville has an active Friends of the Library group. It stages an annual Readers' Theater series that packs the library's public room during three nights in the winter months. The Friends also recently sponsored an essay writing contest for local sixth, seventh, and eighth graders.



ABOVE: Guerneville resident Jason Weaver works on his laptop while his daughter, Saja Spearman-Weaver, draws at their town's library.

SAVE THE DATE

Chew On This!

Dinner conversations with local writers

March 14, 2008

Benefit for the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation

Don't miss this chance to bend the ear of
Sonoma County authors over a dinner
prepared by local chefs.

Watch for details in the next issue of this newsletter!

Thank You to “Chocolate Tasting” Fundraiser Sponsors

A heartfelt *thank you* to the many local businesses and individuals who generously contributed to the “Chocolate Tasting and a Movie” event in October. Their support of the Sonoma County Public Library Foundation’s annual fundraiser made it a wonderful evening of food, fun, and fabulous entertainment!

A special *thank you* to **Rialto Cinemas Lakeside** for once again hosting this fantastic event. Many *thank you’s* to the following generous sponsors and raffle prize donors. (And thank you, also, to donors who didn’t make this list due to our press deadline.)

Dinner’s Ready Catering
(Denise Stewart)

Michele Marie’s Patisserie

Powell’s Sweet Shoppe, Windsor

Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory

See’s Candies

Water Street Bistro

Clover Stornetta

Charlene Bunas

Checkers

Friends of the Santa Rosa Libraries

Melissa Kelley

Langley’s on the Green

Oliver’s Market

Puttin’ on the Bisque

Rialto Cinemas Lakeside

Kiyo Okazaki

Jeanne Robinson

Rohnert Park-Cotati Friends of
the Library

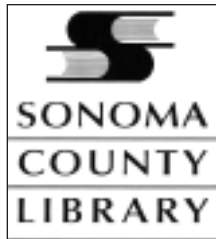
Carol Russell

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Book Drive Teams with Food Bank to Deliver Summer Reading

The Library Foundation’s Children’s Book Drive partnered with the Redwood Empire Food Bank this summer to provide books and readings to low-income children throughout Sonoma County. Over 4000 donated books were distributed through the Food Bank’s summer lunch program to children at about two dozen sites.

On many days, children could be seen sitting quietly, waiting for lunch with an open book in their laps. “Activities like the reading program help make the lunch site a place the children want to come to,” said Mike Siegel, Activities Director of the Food Bank. At the end of the summer, the children received books to take home.

The Children’s Book Drive was a pilot program this year, with collection barrels at two sites: the Rincon Valley Library and Central Library. The response was overwhelming. “Our patrons were highly motivated to pass their books onto another child,” said Jennifer Duran, the children’s librarian at the Rincon Valley Regional Library.

Additional books came from Coddington Mall customers. The mall hosted a collection barrel as part of its Simon Kidgits Club’s Book Blast! program.

Help came from volunteers of the Library Foundation and Santa Rosa Friends of the Library, who sorted and transported books to the Food Bank. Also, Speedway Children’s Charities funded the signs for the Book Drive collection barrels and supported the Summer Reading Program and the Traveling Summer Reading Club.