NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS FROM LIBRARY DIRECTOR GREG NEEDHAM

As we work our way through 2013, I wanted to give you a look back at our fiscal year that ended June 30, 2013. It was a year of improvements as well as challenges for Sheppard Memorial Library. The library experienced very strong use of all services at all locations during the year. Circulation of books and other materials totaled 502,322 items borrowed; we had 488,909 visits to the main library and the branches; and 193,681 public computer sessions took place at our libraries. We also had 31,766 participants in programs and meetings at the library system-wide (21,989 in library programs, 9,777 in other programs and meetings). The statistics show that library services continue to be in high demand.

We had a successful year of grant projects in the library system that improved service for many people. During the fiscal year, we installed all new public computers at the East Branch and the Winterville Library, to replace the eight-year-old computers at those locations. This improvement was made possible by a federal LSTA grant for $25,000. A second LSTA grant for $20,000 was implemented to add books and other materials system-wide. For both grants, matching funds were provided by the wonderful Friends of the Sheppard Memorial Library, without whose support we would have to request matching funding from local government. The Friends annual book sales are major fundraisers that enable the library to improve resources and services in very significant ways, supporting not only grant projects but also the summer reading programs, book collections, quiz bowls, and more! Also during 2012-2013, we applied for and won a $100,000 federal LSTA grant to be used in 2013-2014 to add radio frequency identification (RFID) technology, now in use at the main library only, to all of our branch locations. This will enable us to provide intuitive self-checkout as an option at the branches (about 15% of the entire library system checkouts now take place through one self-check unit at the main library) as well as conduct super-efficient inventory work using handheld devices, so that we can efficiently reconcile the catalog to the collection on an ongoing basis. The end results of this grant will be greatly-improved access to the collection of books and other materials! Matching funding, once again, will be provided by the Friends of the Sheppard Memorial Library.

A number of important innovations were made during the year. We unveiled our all new web site, including a special children’s web site, and also an interactive children’s library catalog. After our Facebook renaissance the year before, we added a separate children’s library Facebook account, as well as Twitter and Pinterest accounts, all of which have made it easier than ever for people to stay informed about what the library has to offer! Our 3M Cloud Library collection of popular fiction e-books launched in July of 2012, and later in the year we added our Zinio e-magazines service. Both of these e-collections are seeing constantly-increasing use. As we continue to develop these new offerings, we are also putting ever more focus on developing the collection of traditional books and other materials, and traditional services saw terrific participation, especially the summer reading program!

For two budget years, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, the library experienced local government budget cuts, which combined totaled a 5% reduction over 2010-2011. Because of the cuts to local government funding, we did not qualify for all of our funding from the State of North Carolina for 2012-2013. Even though our overall budget was reduced during those two years, I would point out that the City of Greenville and also Pitt County provided one-time funding for the replacement of the out-of-warranty roof section at the main library, and the City of Greenville also funded security cameras at the main library, Carver Library, and East Branch, and necessary repairs to the public elevator at the main library. The budget stabilized and even recovered slightly for 2013-2014, so that we once again will receive all of our state funding, and we have implemented a variety of streamlining and cost efficiency measures across the library system. I am proud to report that our staff members have adapted to the changes and worked extremely hard to do more with less and find better and smarter ways to provide the best library service possible going forward. We remain extremely grateful for the support of our patrons, and for the funding and support provided by our local government!
Adult patrons are requesting …

DEADLINE  
by Sandra Brown

NEVER GO BACK  
by Lee Child

FINAL CUT  
by Catherine Coulter

GONE  
by James Patterson & Michael Ledwidge

THANKLESS IN DEATH  
by J.D. Robb

Statistical Snapshot:

September

39,253 items circulated
942 new borrowers registered  
(65,394 total borrowers)

Public computer/Internet use  
(including wi-fi/laptop use)  
16,293 sessions

Reminders

Daylight Saving Time Ends  
Sunday, November 3

Holiday Closing  
Monday, November 11
News From Our Branch Libraries

The Imagination Station presented a special program geared for preschoolers at the East Branch Library. The program was “Furs, Tails, and Scales.” Both children and parents were excited and enjoyed the event.

Story hour for children ages 3-5 is every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m.

The program “Furs, Tails and Scales” was also presented at the Winterville Public Library. The Imagination Station brought live animals for the children to touch and learn about. Everyone in attendance enjoyed the presentation.

Story time is every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. for children ages 3-5.

We have lots of new books to check out at the Carver Library.

Story hour is every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. for children ages 3-5.

We are looking for groups to participate in the Black History Quiz Bowl which is held in February. For more information, please call 252-329-4583.

We encourage you to stop by the Bethel Library and check out our new books. If the Bethel Library doesn’t own the title you want, we can get it for you. We have courier service that comes more frequently so you can get your request in a timely manner.

We have lots of new books to check out at the Bethel Library.

Story hour is every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. for children ages 3-5.

We encourage you to stop by the Bethel Library and check out our new books. If the Bethel Library doesn’t own the title you want, we can get it for you. We have courier service that comes more frequently so you can get your request in a timely manner.

Children’s Library Happenings

Many new families are attending the morning story hours. The seasoned preschoolers are great listeners, setting an example for the new children. The little ones at Toddler Story Hour stay close to their parent or caregiver, but like the stories, movement activities, and music.

Afternoons are filled with children visiting to gather books necessary to complete homework and special projects. Some have adult tutors helping them read or work on homework. Other children are busy finding books or enjoying the games, learning activities, and stories on the Early Literacy Station computers.

Special Programs in the Children’s Library Program Room

Anna Pridgen
Thursday, October 17
7:00 p.m.
Families are welcome.
Sponsored by Raising a Reader and Sheppard Memorial Library

Fur, Tails, & Scales
Wednesday, October 23
11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.
children ages 3-5
Sponsored by the Imagination Station and the Children’s Library

Curious George Story Hour
Friday, October 25,
10:30 a.m.
For the entire family!

Costume Party & Scary Movie Night
Monday, October 28
6:00 p.m.
4th-7th graders
Get a special prize for dressing like a character from a book!

Spooktacular Stories
Tuesday, October 29, at 7:00 p.m.
For children ages 6 and under
Wear a costume and bring a treat bag!
JUVENILE OUTREACH

The Juvenile Outreach Librarian has continued to visit childcare centers during the month of October with stories about the ocean. Squid finds out he’s not as big as he thinks he is in the book “I’m the Biggest Thing in the Ocean” by Kevin Sherry. We are also learning how to help our friends through the book “The Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark” by Deborah Diesen.

The Outreach Librarian was invited to share information about the library with parents and teachers at East Coast Migrant Head Start in Fountain and she looks forward to a visit to the library from their students in November.