



Library Director Report October 2023

Anita Marple

Wyoming Library Association Conference: This month began with 5 library staff and myself attending the annual conference in Casper. Our staff attended sessions on programming, marketing, and current library issues. The keynote speaker was author Sarah Vowell, who spoke about the importance of libraries in her life and in society. Conference attendance is a valuable opportunity to connect with colleagues around the state and to renew vision for one's work. I thoroughly enjoyed presenting a session on reader's theater as an avenue for literacy programming for preschool children to high school students. I had a supporting role for the session on navigating the Wyoming Legislature's website.

Staff Training: Our all-staff training day on October 9 focused on 1) a review of certain policies and procedures, 2) a session on reference interview skills, and 3) a breakout session for youth services and adult services staff to meet separately to discuss issues and share ideas. Maintenance staff participated in policy review and then met separately to focus on maintenance issues.

Facilities Supervisor Alex Carlson completed a 2-day OSHA training this month.

Thank you to the FC Library Foundation for grant money to support our training times.

Meeting with WARM Representatives: Staff from the Wyoming Association of Risk Management (our property insurer) came through Fremont County and met with us to discuss cyber security. A review of WARM's best practices showed that Fremont County's status for cyber security is in good shape. Kevin will continue to organize training for all county staff on this issue.

Lander Event Coordinator Meeting: The Lander Community Foundation, LOR Foundation, and Wind River Visitors Council held a meeting for Lander area community group organizers to create new lines of communication and foster cooperation in event planning throughout the year. I found this to be a productive time to discuss strengths of Lander's infrastructure and services and areas for improvement. This was an opportunity to promote our libraries as the key community resource for meeting room space and internet access.

Lander Community Foundation Power Hour: I participated in this Power Hour for local entities to learn more about grant opportunities. I gave a brief presentation about free access at the Lander Library to Candid's Foundation Directory, Foundation Maps, and Grants for Individuals. The Lander Library is part of a pilot program for rural areas with Candid to provide these databases free through onsite library access. Subscribing to these databases is expensive, so it is a valuable resource to our local nonprofits as they search for grant opportunities. I will be taking additional training in navigating the databases so that I may provide assistance to nonprofit groups is learning to use the databases.

Records Retention Schedule: I reviewed that latest guidelines provided by the Wyoming State Archives for County Library records. In the packet of documents for the November Library



Board meeting, I provided a Memo that lists the directives related to board documents. There is no record retention guideline for video recordings of board meetings. I have contacted County Clerk Julie Freese for knowledge she may have on this question.

Staffing Updates: Assistant Director Shari Haskins and I have begun working on staff evaluations. Shari has completed evaluations for Dubois staff and will complete Riverton staff evaluations prior to her retirement on November 10. I will be working with Rachel Arnold on Lander staff evaluations and Alex Carlson on maintenance staff evaluations. The goal for completion is the end of December.

We have hired the Dubois 16-hour custodial/maintenance position and the third 12-hour library assistant position in Riverton. Currently we have two open positions which are advertised: the Riverton Youth Services Lead Librarian and the Riverton Branch Manager. The branch manager position has been advertised both in Wyoming and regionally through the Mountain Plains Library Association which includes Wyoming, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Nebraska, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Kansas, and Oklahoma.

Wyoming State Librarian Update: Jamie Markus has resigned as State Librarian to take the position of Assistant Dean of Libraries for Resource Discovery & Management at the University of Wyoming. Jamie served 18 years at the WSL, the last eight as State Librarian. His leadership has been a steady force in keeping Wyoming libraries current with industry trends and in navigating the challenging issues of the past two years. Personally, I have appreciated his support and encouragement in my first two years as a library director. He will be missed, but the whole Wyoming director community appreciates that he will still be part of our Wyoming libraries.

The Interim State Librarian is Abby Beaver, a long-time Wyoming librarian with expertise in several library areas. The search for a new State Librarian is underway.

Policy Issues: Throughout the month I have been working on the internet filtering issue. Kevin Shultz and I have discussed at length the various aspects of implementing filtering. He has provided the library board a memorandum on his recommendation should the board vote to move forward with internet filtering. Implementation of filtering will require changes to our Internet Use Policy; I have been reviewing the policies of other public libraries and issue statements from the American Library Association.

Shari Haskin's Upcoming Retirement: A public reception for Shari will be held at the Riverton Branch Library on November 10, 3:00-5:00pm. I am deeply grateful for the 24 years Shari has invested in the Fremont County Library System. Please join us in celebrating her contributions and wishing her all the best in a well-earned retirement!



Lander Library Report October 2023

Rachel Arnold, Lander Manager

I personally am getting used to a new normal and am so grateful for this library family. Each and everyone have been so kind. Thank you all for your kind words and prayers this last month for me and the kids.

Adult Services Department

October has been a little slower in the computer lab for the beginning of the month but has picked up again these last few days. I think the warmer temperatures this fall have given reason to be outside a little longer. The students and other patrons have been utilizing our quiet study spaces on a continual basis. There has been a handful of patrons in everyday just working away.

Met Opera: The first Met Opera was held on October 22, titled "Dead Man Walking." Six people attended.

Book Clubs: Bookies Book Club met on October 5, at the Lander Senior Center. This next month we will be hosting the 2nd Sinks Canyon Book Club. The book selected this time is "Downriver: Into the Future of Water in the West" by Heather Hansman.

Displays: The displays mentioned in the September board report submitted by Kennedy Erhart continue to be on the floor. Fall has been sticking around a little longer than last year so the books we highlighted are still appropriate. Tuesday brings Halloween celebrations and hopefully some extra patrons as well. We will be setting up new book displays starting the first week in November.

Youth Services Department

October's programming highlight was of course the Story Hour Players presentation of their Halloween Plays. We also started checking out board games to patrons and had a visit from a children's book author.

A rundown of our numbers...

Preschool Visits: Little Children Preschool, Lander Learning Express, Child Development Services, and Apple Valley Preschool all visited us this month for stories. Lander Learning Express also came for Lego DUPLO playtime and to check out books. In total, these accounted for 74 patron visits.

Public StoryTimes: Only three weeks of public StoryTimes were held this week due to the Halloween Plays on the final week. StoryTime and Toddler Time occurred on October 4th and October 11th with a combined all-age StoryTime on October 18th. A total of 77 attended these sessions. StoryTime Dance Party had a monster theme this month with 14 in attendance.



Halloween Plays: Third, fourth, and fifth grade students from Academy of the Winds, Baldwin Creek, Gannett Peak, Wind River, and Fort Washakie Elementary Schools all attended the plays this year. Besides the school performances, the Story Hour Players also performed two public performances, one in the morning and another in the evening for a total of 14 performances. A total of 625 people enjoyed the shows.

Author Visit: Marianne Stetson, self-published author of *The Green Flamingo*, came to share her book with homeschool students on October 4th. A total of 42 students and parents enjoyed the reading and the discussion afterward about how to go about writing your own story.

Lego Club: Lego Club is going strong this year. The group met on October 5th and 27 attended. Creations were displayed in the Children's Department for the next week and were enjoyed by all.

Chess Club: Chess Club met twice this month. Kirk Norman is enjoying working with the kids who attend. So far it has been a different set of kids each time, but he is hoping the program will grow. This month 5 kids attended.

Science Fair Support Group: This group has not been as well-attended as we hoped. One student has been consistently attending for several weeks. We are taking a break for a couple weeks now as he is at the point in his project that he doesn't need assistance until he gets some data. We will resume in November and re-advertise to see if other students now want assistance.

CanTeen Activities: Wednesday afternoon activities in the CanTeen this month included making leashes for Pet Connection animals, making felt pencil-toppers, playing with Legos, and making glow-in-the-dark ghosts. A total of 24 teens attended.

Other School Group Visits: A variety of school groups utilized our services this month. Teachers and/or students from Academy of the Winds, Elevate Academy, Life Skills, and Probitas Virtual School came to use our resources at various times this month. I don't have a total count of these users.

A group of homeschool families requested a lesson on using the library. After a tour and some explanations, Tamara led the students in a game that helped teach how to find things in the library.

Passive Programming: We provided do-it-yourself activities in the Tween Space and vinyl sticker giveaways for teens and tweens. Our monthly math puzzle returned halfway through the month, with three patrons solving the problem so far to earn a rice-krispie treat.

Halloween Giveaways: We are planning to pass out pencils and temporary tattoos on Halloween to any kids that come to the library.



Riverton Branch Library & Dubois Branch Library

October 2023

Shari Haskins, Assistant Library Director

Final Board Report

Fremont County Library System, Director Ada Howard, Barbara Oakleaf and Gloria Brodle chose to give me a chance and employed me for various positions for a quarter of a century. In that period of time I met the most influential Wyoming librarians and Directors. My colleagues have been my basis for success, we shared mutual missions to deliver essential services, programs and events to this community and the surrounding areas.

With twenty-five years of colorful experiences, I have a treasure trove of stories that I will never forget. My most recent unforgettable story just happened on October 24th, 2023. I got to interview "Leo" for one of the 12-hour positions. A week before, he came into the library needing my signature for employment verification searches. I said, "We have a job opening for a 12-hour position. If you take an application, I will sign your document." He was enthusiastic and accepted the application.

To my surprise, two days later Leo returned the application. It was incomplete, but I get many of those type of applications. I knew I would give Leo an interview just for the opportunity to experience the process. The interview was on the 24th. I began the interview by asking him if he truly had never had a job. He said that did have two jobs that he very much enjoyed. COVID happened and he was laid off. I had to inquire about his education; he only finished 11th grade, and he had two children while in high school. I had to make sure my face didn't appear dismayed. The interview is proceeding, and we talked about customer service which he said he was very good at. He then started asking me a lot about the position and what it all entails. He said he didn't read, and I asked what was the last book he had read. Straight-faced, honest, and with no humiliation, he looked at me and said, "I can't read, I don't know how." He continued to share his education experience, or lack of, and said he was diagnosed as dyslexic. He said, "I couldn't do this job." He then asked if there was anything available that was janitorial related.

My heart and my mind as well was wide open. Here we are in the twenty-first century with every resource available including on-line, and we have a young person that was a "throw away kid." Not one institution could help equip the kid to work. We should never forget the "Leo's" because there are plenty of people in the same sad circumstances. By the way, he had never left his rural community until just a few months ago.

Let's go back twenty years, 2003, I am driving up Main Street heading to work when I see this kid on a BMX bike, riding with no hands, hat to the side, ciggie in the corner of his mouth, riding against the traffic and texting. He was in complete control.

I don't have any regrets or complaints about my twenty-five years of employment. Riverton brought color and challenges to my life that has helped mold me into the person I am today. I will always be grateful for this golden time that was a perfect fit for me.



October Day-to-Day: Finally, after one and a half years of heavy marketing and promotions, we are seeing pre-COVID visitor numbers. Monday, October 23, we saw 296 visitors. Remember, we are only open four hours on Mondays, and there were only three staff people; I was one of the three. We now have the staff that I can easily schedule a 4th person and maybe even a 5th for Mondays. Saturdays, on the other hand, are still very slow going and we can manage the open hours with three people.

My last hurrah is planning a system-wide marketing campaign, "Saturdays are Family Days." The ad will contain library hours and service reminders for all three branches. It will be colorful and fun.

I can't forget to write about the very talented, dedicated, and upbeat staff that have been graciously weathering the increases in numbers and being patient filling in when I needed them to while finishing employment searches and interviews. This includes Dubois as well.