



The Voter

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

October, 2011

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Charlene McAllister, Editor

OCTOBER LWV MEETING TO FOCUS ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

Mendocino County voters will be asked to approve Measure A, an ordinance providing for a library special transactions and use tax on the November 8, 2011, ballot. This issue of the VOTER looks at the county library system. League members will examine Measure A at the October 11, 2011, meeting and other ballot

items. Voter Service Chair JoAn Blackstone will give a recap of the election and recent redistricting action. Elections on the ballot include six races for unified school district board members. Trustee Area 3 also is a contested race for County Board of Education. Other races in-

clude elections for board members to Brooktrails Community Services District, Redwood Valley Water District and Area 7 of the Mendo-Lake Community College District.

Please join us. The meeting will be at 10 a.m., Tues., Oct. 11 at Fort Bragg's C.V. Starr Center Community Cen-

INSIDE LIBRARIES

FORT BRAGG	3
COVELO	4
UKIAH	6
WILLITS	8
POINT ARENA	10
LWV CALENDAR	12
LWV MEMBERSHIP	14

HAVE YOU HUGGED YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY TODAY?

By Barbara Auerbach

It took centuries to create public libraries and it appears that one recession may make them extinct.

People will always have private libraries. They started with stone tablets and continued into the 15th century. Private libraries were for the upper class. Books could be borrowed from these private libraries but most often they were exchanged among the elite, well educated people of means.

Subscription libraries, or social clubs as they were called, came about in the 1700's where men of means and higher education shared book collections by purchasing sub-

scriptions. It was like joining a social club. In today's dollars, the membership fee could range from \$5 a share to \$300. Benjamin Franklin encouraged their existence.

Public libraries on the other hand did not exist. I would not have been able to visit the public libraries like the New York Fifth Avenue library where I could study until the lights went out at 12 a.m. or the small branch that allowed me to take ten

books out at a time when I was eleven and twelve years old because I couldn't decide which books to read. All the books fascinated me. I always returned them late for a fee of about ten cents. My husband and I are still late and the fines are still low.

For years libraries of one sort or another existed without permanence or steady funding.

In the U.S., libraries survived because of donations from private clubs, the General Federation of Women's

Clubs, and philanthropists like Andrew Carnegie.

In 1914, the executive secretary of the American Library Association, G.B. Utley, stated that "fully one half the libraries in the country had been established through the influence of American women."

New Hampshire and Massachusetts started the first public libraries supported by local government taxes. California followed suit with reading rooms and shared libraries. People who came West and lived near mining towns were starved for news from home. Reading rooms were

Continued Page 2, Column 1



Entrance to Willits Carnegie Library Building—now a local television station

Libraries-Continued from Page 1
 established in stores and offices where books were loaned or rented for a small fee. In 1878 California passed the Rogers Act, following the success of the legislation passed in Massachusetts which enabled cities and towns to levy taxes to establish permanent housing for reading rooms. The first public library in California appeared in Monterey in 1849. Other cities such as San Francisco, Sacramento, Stockton and San Diego followed suit.

Many libraries primarily served scholars and they weren't open when ordinary workers could use them. "Robber Baron" and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), thought everyone should have the opportunity to improve their lot. Between 1881 and 1923 Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation provided funding for some 1,700 library buildings. In California there were 142 public libraries built with 121 grants totaling \$2,779,487.

Two Carnegie libraries were built in Mendocino County and one was built in Lake County before 1920—all with \$8,000 grants: Ukiah (now a real estate building on the corner of State and Clay), Willits (now a cable television station on East Commercial Street) and Lakeport (on the Clear Lake shore, now used by University of California Davis researchers).

A 1910 Classical Revival style building in Ferndale, CA, designed by Warren Skellings, is the only Carnegie building in Northwest California that still functions as a public library.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Editor's Note—Our county public libraries are in trouble and the Board of Supervisors as well as most city councils and school boards support a one-eighth cent sales tax that will help the library system by raising \$1.3 million annually in revenue. If the tax gets 2/3 approval in the November 8 election, it will sunset in 16 years. League members decided to educate themselves about the county library system and in June, the League board voted to support County Measure A based on the LWV local public library position. VOTER staff members visited five library branches and the Bookmobile (September VOTER). This VOTER looks at what staff members observed at the five branches. Below are highlights of the current county library status.

Current Status:

- *Book circulation increased 13.6 per cent last year*
- *Public library cards are held by 54 per cent of county residents—about 48,000 cardholders*
- *State funding for Mendocino County libraries has dropped more than 80 per cent and may be eliminated in 2012*
- *The Library District receives no money from the county general fund*
- *The last three years has seen a 25 per cent decrease in overall funding and a 30 per cent reduction in staff*
- *Libraries have reduced hours from 40 to 21 per week*
- *Fort Bragg, Ukiah and Willits have no children's services and the inter-library loan program has been discontinued*
- *Almost all books, DVDs and other items come from donations and support of various Friends of Libraries organizations*
- *Closure of the Willits library is under review. Reduction in hours of operation at all other branches also is under review*

Future Needs and Goals:

- *Restore hours at existing branches through the county so they will be open at least five days a week with convenient hours along with the possibility of expanding operation to six days a week*
- *Restore library programs for children and young adults, including full summer reading clubs*
- *Buy new books, ebooks, children's books, DVDs, music, self-learning materials for all county residents*
- *Restore Inter-Library Loans service*
- *Expand outreach programs with the library Bookmobile for individuals who cannot easily come to a library*
- *Provide a self-service checkout option at each branch within three years*
- *Re-establish reserve funds*
- *Make community rooms available again to groups and individuals*

Source: Ukiah Friends of the Library. A VOTER staff member also discussed this status report with the County Librarian

Local LWV Position on Libraries

The League of Women Voters of Mendocino County supports improved library services and facilities which promote economy and utilization.

Checking In and Checking Out the Fort Bragg Library

A young woman starts to volunteer at the Fort Bragg library when she is in high school. Librarian Judith Kayser mentors her and the young lady currently pursues a college degree in library science. Another woman comes to Fort Bragg on vacation, visits the library and inquires about the literacy program. After talking with Ms. Kayser, she moves to Fort Bragg and volunteers for the library branch's literacy program. These are just two stories about the Fort Bragg branch shared with LWVMC President Jane Person.

Ms. Kayser earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Denver and holds a masters degree in Library Information Science. After working 25 years as a Denver school librarian, she moved to California where she started work as the Mendocino County Bookmobile librarian. She transferred to Fort Bragg in 2006 when a major renovation of the library began.

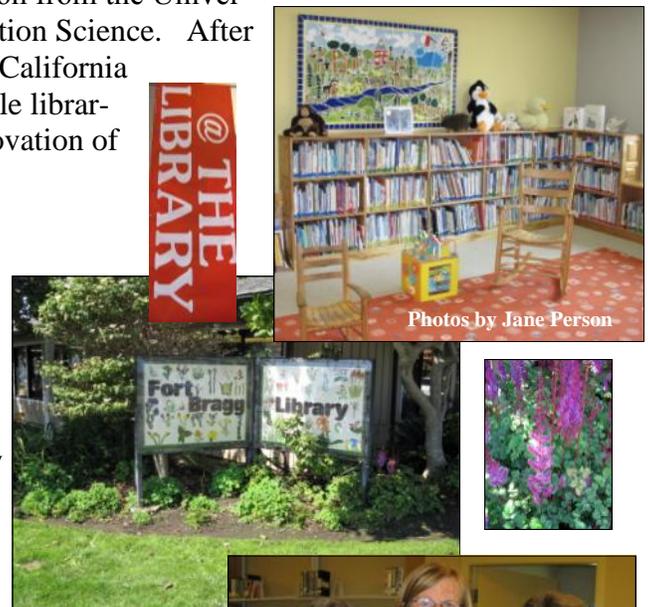
In June, 2011, Ms. Kayser says circulation was 11,442 books. In August, after budget cuts brought on a three-day week at the library, circulation was 10,300.

Patrons love mysteries, Ms. Kayser says and when the library was temporarily located in the Veterans' building across Laurel Street during renovation, she followed checkouts closely to keep enough mysteries on shelves.

Two county staff members work at the branch which benefits from the help of 55 volunteers. In August, 2011, those volunteers worked a total of 415 hours. Help from the Friends of the Fort Bragg Library doesn't stop there. Friends pay for everything down to paper clips, says Ms. Person. The county pays salaries, lights and water. Friends pay to clean the carpet and foot the bill for a gardener to maintain the landscape once a month. Magazine subscriptions are paid for by patrons through an Adopt-A-Magazine program.

Fort Bragg library patrons are familiar with how the branch serves the community—from the free meeting rooms (now available only when the library staff person is present), to the 8 computers (free to the public along with 24-hour wi fi), and a Children's Story Time. That Story Time as well as the free literacy program are victims of recent cutbacks.

The August 25 issue of the *Fort Bragg Advocate-News* ran a story by Community Reporter Janet Ashford that went behind the scenes to tell personal patron stories and describe the community spirit that lived in the branch from its genesis in an 1890 Women's Christian Temperance Union reading room, through an arson fire that completely destroyed the library in 1987, through reconstruction, renovation and political funding efforts that resulted in the organization of the non-profit Friends of the Fort Bragg Library and the creation in 1992 by the Board of Supervisors of the special tax district to permanently fund the county library system.



Photos by Jane Person



At the circulation desk from left: Library Technician Ann Rennacker, Branch Manager Judith Kayser and Friend Valerie Frey who also serves as District 4 appointee on the Mendocino County Library Advisory Board.

ROUND VALLEY REMEMBERS THE PAST, LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

History threw the book at Covelo, California.

But there was joy in Covelo along with the conflict, blood, work and tears. And during the latter part of the last century, that joy surely lived in the town library—first in the old Covelo Community Library run by beloved librarian Georgina Wright-Pete and now in the new Round Valley Public Library where a gutsy and dedicated group of residents works to make the library “the new heart of the community.”

Gone are the days and nights when a cat named Dewey slept in the ceiling tiles of the old library on Covelo Road next to the bank.

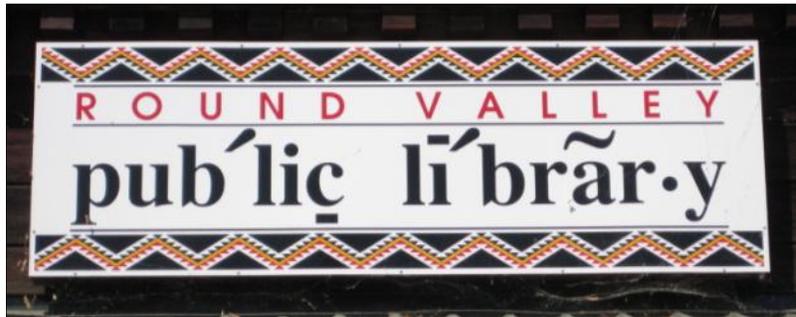
In March 2010, Covelo’s Round Valley Public Library opened—a 3,700 square foot public library connected to a 1,200 square foot community meeting room. By September 2010, Friends of the Round Valley Public Library owned the building free and clear.

Some \$729,950 had been raised by the nonprofit group to buy and transform the former Round Valley Inn into a public library.

The primary funding source came from grants by the Thomas J. Long Foundation, the tobacco settlement board, First 5, an unnamed individual, an anonymous Northern California foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Community Facilities Grant Program, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, the TWANDA Foundation and years of hard work by Covelo citizens that included fund-raising community raffles, dances, barbecues, New Year’s Eve parties, musical events, the annual Blackberry Festival footrace and much more.

Now, the same Friends have raised an additional

\$249,200 to add a covered patio, café and certified community kitchen to what is called the Library Commons—construction that will further transform the library into a community center. When the kitchen is completed, it will be used to make food for events at the Library Commons as well as for producing food for sale at the Farmer’s Market, Blackberry Festival, Christmas Bazaar, Indian Days, and other local events.



There are signs around the Library Commons that convey a mission to “support a full-range of educational opportunities, artistic activities, community interactions and

collaborations that encourage community health and sustainability.”

The original community library opened in 1978 and became the public library in 1992 when it joined the Mendocino County library system. Friends of the Round Valley Public Library, a 501(c)(3), accepted responsibility for the next 18 years for rent, utilities, janitorial services, book donations and volunteer hours to help with day-to-day chores. The county was responsible for equipment, a yearly new book allocation and the salary of one full-time library associate.

For most of the year, Library Associate Rachel Borum is the entire county staff. Since the library can be open only if she is at work, she takes good care of herself. “If I’m sick,” she said, “I let the whole community down.” Ms. Borum is a native of Reno, NV, with a bachelor’s degree in Spanish literature. She has worked for the county library for five years and is a familiar figure in the community. She greets patrons by name as they come through the door.

The library currently is open 4 days a week. If the November library measure passes, the doors will

Continued on next page

Continued from Page 3

open five days a week, with an additional employee so projects and meetings can continue at the branch, which currently supports a children's story hour, free legal access via video-phone, and computers for Mendocino College classes online. There is also active involvement in community projects—especially work with the Sustainability Guild. Guild members and Ms. Borum are discussing preliminary plans to transform the old card catalog



Top: One of six great Indian chiefs in carved totem in the library reading room by artist Jack Pinkham. Right: "Warrior" hanging by Covelo fabric artist John Marshall in library media room. Above: Library Associate Rachel Borum at front desk.

for a seed-lending library. Catalog cards are being replaced by a digital catalog.

A tour of the library takes one to the popular mystery corner (mysteries and Westerns are the fiction of choice of the Round Valley library patrons, Ms. Borum says), 7 computers (including one Mac and 24-hour wi fi service), media room, children's corner, and periodicals (funded by Adopt-a-Magazine contributors). In addition, the library boasts an impressive collection of books on Native American literature and culture, serving a vital majority population in the valley.

On display in the library is the book *Families—A Pictorial History of Round Valley 1864-1938* by local writers Elmer Bauer and Floyd Barney. Sales of this book have raised \$100,000 that have gone toward the new facility.



History is alive in Covelo and anyone who visits or lives in this picturesque, isolated town of 1,255 residents quickly learns about consequences of the arrival of white settlers to Round Valley in the 1850s.

This new public library is smack in the middle of downtown Covelo, across the street from the post office. It is a vital

part of a community that is as much about the future as it is about the past.

A Note from the Friends of the Round Valley Public Library

We have about 120 paid-up members of The Friends of the Round Valley Public Library. The vast majority are local folks with a good number of members from out of the area—people who have a connection with the valley, particularly those who lived here in the past. Many members have taken advantage of the \$5 membership fee, as we are an impoverished community. The members are very supportive of the efforts we are making to build a Library Commons, a center for the library and the community.

The new facility has developed a strong interest from the entire community. This whole process—planning, fundraising, building—has helped revitalize our community. It has sown the seeds of development for other projects. For example, the Covelo Radio Project (www.coveloradio.org) and the Round Valley Sustainability Project. There is a facebook page for interested folks at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/323909664195/> There is some info on our official website <http://www.roundvalley.org/library/>

Betsy Brown, Secretary, Friends of the Round Valley Public Library

IN UKIAH, WHERE A FRIEND IN NEED-IS A LIBRARY

Numbers don't lie. But they don't tell the whole truth either.

Consider this:

Ten employees worked at the Ukiah Public Library branch when it opened in 1972. Some 26,000 books were checked out every year.

In 2011, 3.3 employees work at the branch and 26,000 books are checked out every two months. That's not counting videos, DVDs and audio books which did not live in libraries in 1972.

So how does the work get done?

"I don't give up," Ukiah Branch Manager Eliza Wingate says. "Some people say public libraries are experiencing a demise, but our circulation is going up. Yesterday, there were 1,000 people in here," Ms. Wingate said during an interview at the library July 28.

The library is the spot to find resources in the bustling county seat—materials shared among public libraries in Mendocino, Sonoma and Lake Counties. Before recent severe county budget cuts, shared resources included

materials from libraries all over the world. There are computers here, 24-hour wi fi, audio books, DVDs and books—sometimes as many as 60 cartons passing through the workroom on any given day. Ukiah is where books-on-hold are packed up for delivery to branches throughout the county, and that packing area typically holds 500 books—another impressive number.

But sometimes the only way to measure some things in the library is by the size of a smile on a kid's face. The same budget cuts that saw layoffs and reduction of services at all branches eliminated children's reading programs here. Probably the most heartbreaking cut was the loss of popular Children's Librarian Ina Gordon and preschool story time. "The children miss her," county Librarian Melanie Lightbody says. Also eliminated was A Child, A Dog and a Good Book which combined children, books and certified therapy dogs in the Ukiah branch's children's program. Ms. Wingate created the program and describes it as one of the most creative ways to inspire reading at an early age.

"Kids, hours, books," says Ms. Lightbody when she talks about priorities. If the proposed county library measure passes in November, children's programs will be restored, branches will be open five days a week and the book budget will go from \$14,000 to \$150,000, another significant number, even though "it's still less than what we need."

"I believe public libraries are places where you achieve what you want. If you need help, it's our job to provide it," Ms. Lightbody says.

And that help comes in all forms—from online auto repair information to one-on-one help with student research. "I've been helping a student who is researching the effect of spanking on a child's IQ," Ms. Wingate says. "It's a difficult subject to research, but our reference world is much bigger these days."

Ms. Wingate, who has an undergraduate art degree from the University of California Berkeley and a master's degree in library science from Philadelphia's Drexel University, worked for years as the Ukiah branch reference librarian.

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Ukiah Branch Manager Eliza Wingate.



County Librarian Melanie Lightbody



Books on hold are reserved and readied for dispatch to other library branches in the Ukiah library workroom.



From the Mendocino Quilt Artists' 12th Annual Ukiah Library quilt show in August.

Continued from Page 6

She helped patrons find “anything from the name of a great aunt, to identification of art pieces, to the price of stocks in 1956, to early version of music lyrics, to medical questions, to old obituaries.”

The requests for help sometimes bring surprises. The library phone recently rang and a patron traveling in South Africa asked Ms. Wingate to help her

download an audio book. “She didn’t have her library card with her, but I recognized her voice, and I was happy to help,” she says.

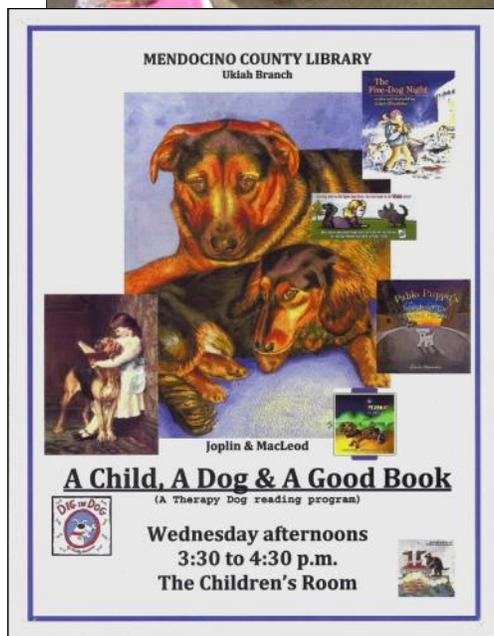
Help is a two-way street at the branch. It comes from the volunteer Friends of the Ukiah Valley Library (FOL) which has filled many voids created by budget cuts. Friends are the sole support of the branch materials budget.

“In 2010, we took in \$45,300.58,” Friends Treasurer Carol Howlett says. Those funds came from membership dues, donations and money earned through book sales, a magazine drive, online sales, newsletter ads and other money-raising efforts. “Of that amount, \$41,000.24 went for children’s and general collection material, children’s programs, office supplies, facility improvement and equipment. “In the ‘old days’ the FOL wasn’t asked to spend this kind of money on the library collection.... We on the FOL board always hoped to spend it on something special, like the children’s room in a new library. Now we just keep the library going.”

Friends are local residents who love their library—like Joe Scherf, 88, one of the oldest volunteers, or Barbara Oldenburg, who volunteered at the branch until she was 93. “We have one of the highest use of volunteers in the state—18 volunteers to every staff person,” Ms. Lightbody says.

There are more than 600 members of the Friends of the Ukiah Valley Library. Many of them work on the floor, behind the scenes, and in the branch basement with Ms. Wingate’s help and supervision. She says she wears a “hat with four colors” in her new branch manager job. It seems her hat is sprouting a rainbow: Circulation, reference, community relations, website management, catalog, personnel, shelving, liaison with the Bookmobile and the Friends. She also contributes to the library blog feature called “Find Out What the Library Staff is Reading.” August choices included the *Draft of the Ukiah Valley Area Plan* and *Kissing Arizona*, a new mystery by Elizabeth Gunn.

Like she said, Eliza Wingate doesn’t ever give up, quit—or stop.



Therapy dogs Joplin and MacLeod participated in the Ukiah program to bring children and dogs together with books. Poster drawing by Selene Anema.



Lost to budget cuts: Top—Children’s Librarian Ina Gordon led story time programs in branches. Above, fans of the *A Child, a Dog & A Good Book* program with certified therapy dogs.

Photos by Eliza Wingate

WILLITS—WHERE LIBRARIANS ARE HEROES

Dave Frick is moving.

That's because the popular Mendocino County Bookmobile driver will soon take the wheel of a new state-of-the-art bookmobile that was funded in large part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture—and federal grant guidelines recommend the vehicle be housed in a more rural location than Ukiah where the current bookmobile lives. So Mr. Frick is taking his bookmobile on the road and moving his home base to the Willits Library.

That's no surprise to Willits Branch Librarian Donna Kerr who says all branch librarians "know our communities very well."

"We're not only rural, but there are official maps that still consider us frontier," she says. "It's all about geography."

For instance, the population of Willits is slightly smaller than Fort Bragg, but there is a big difference between the two towns.

"It was an A-Ha moment for me when I realized the density per square mile in Willits is one half that of Fort Bragg." So even though the two towns are nearly equal in population, a library in Willits is not exactly like a library on the coast.

"In Willits, people come to the library maybe once a week—it's what they can afford and what they can work into their schedules," Ms. Kerr says. "People who use the Willits library live out in Pine Mountain, Laytonville, Third Gate, out toward Round Valley, Sherwood, Red Hill and String Creek—and that's rural."

The Willits Library is a building for everybody who comes to town. It is well-lit, nicely landscaped and home to computers and resources. And much more: There is a community meeting room and a sense of place for young people who spend free time in down-

town Willits—where the choices seem to be Safeway, the Mariposa Market or the Willits Library, Ms. Kerr says.

The library is a safe place, and it's a place where people know your name.

"It's not like a big city where you're never far away from a branch," Ms. Kerr says. "For instance, if you don't have a computer, we are the only place in town with free hands-on computers. Willits is a place where high speed internet stops. But here, we have five computers and free 24/7 wi fi donated by a local provider, Willits Online."

Ms. Kerr has worked in the county library system 20 years and has been assigned to Ukiah, Round Valley and Willits, her home town. A native of Boston, she describes libraries as her refuge. "As a teenager, I could go into a library with a book and sit there all day. I was welcomed as long as I was well behaved. So I felt empowered and honored—a powerful feeling for a kid."

She never forgot that feeling and the kids in Willits got her message, because when the local Methodist Church held a recent creativity camp, youngsters named local heroes as the town's librarians, the mayor, and the chief of police—in that order.

By the same token, Ms. Kerr has heroes of her own: Friends of the Willits Library. "We simply couldn't exist without them," she says. The county pays for the building, power, telephones, and payroll of the two full-time staff. The Friends pay everything else, including library materials, periodicals, audio books, refuse collection and disposal, landscape maintenance, subscription services (one such service brings 20 new bestselling books into the library every month and the annual bill for the Willits branch is \$5,000).



The Willits librarian keeps voter registration materials near the front door.

Continued on next page

Continued from Page 8

Patrons not only are reading current best sellers. Mysteries are the fiction of choice. But most check-outs are non-fiction, especially biographies, Ms. Kerr says.

County branches have amassed a collection of material about sustainability that has an enthusiastic following in Sonoma and Lake Counties. Demand from those interlibrary patrons is so high that the Mendocino County Library system is considered a net loaner of sustainability material (rather than a net borrower).

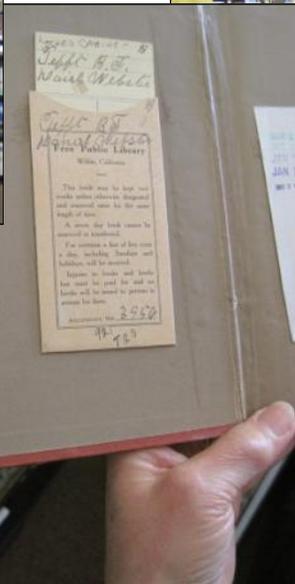
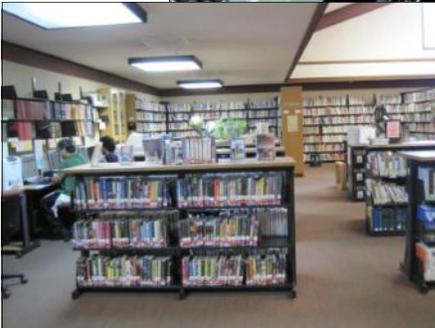
“People want to learn about living off the grid, or how to build their own ponds or how to heat their homes efficiently. It’s an interest that crosses county lines, and we are loaning those materials to Sonoma County, a much bigger library system that has nine branches,” Ms. Kerr says.

Among resources she considers treasures of the branch are *Willits News* archives where patrons can read the newspaper on microfilm. Microfilm readers are disappearing from research centers, victims of the digital age. But a microfilm reader lives in

the Willits library, purchased by the Friends, the City of Willits, the Bank of Willits and Marge Handley. Ms. Kerr also points to a significant selection of large type books (supported by the local Lions Club) and a reference cabinet filled with rare and historical books, including *Genocide and Vendetta: The Round Valley Wars of Northern California*, by Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard, published in 1981 by the University of Oklahoma Press and now out-of-print and hard to find. Anyone who is interested in the history of Mendocino County needs to read this book, Ms. Kerr says. A reference copy is in each branch of the Mendocino County Library.

Although she doesn’t talk about it, it is no secret that the failure of the county library measure on the November ballot may force the branch to close. According to a Mendocino County Library District Report of Current Status of Libraries, “Closure of the Willits library is under review. Reduction in hours of operation at all other branches are also under review.”

“I love this community and I don’t want to work anywhere else,” she says. “I believe in very corny things. The public library is the people’s university, and that institution will be lost if it isn’t publicly funded.”



*Clockwise from above: Willits Library reading room, **Genocide and Vendetta** copy from the rare book collection as well as **Daniel Webster** (probably *Life of Daniel Webster*, by Benjamin Frank Tefft, published in Philadelphia in 1854 by Porter & Coates) with the original Willits Library Accession #3956).*

**Branch Librarian
Donna Kerr**

POINT ARENA—THE LITTLEST LIBRARY BRANCH THAT COULD

POINT ARENA, CA—August 18, 2011, 2-4 p.m.
at the Coast Community Library on Main Street.

Every person who walks through the front door wears a smile, even the teenage boy who comes in to ask to work in the library—as a volunteer.

More than 60 citizens volunteer at the public library in a town with a population of 449. Patrons say the city may be tiny, but the little library in the former downtown general store has a big heart and good circulation that reaches from Sea Ranch/Gualala north to Elk. This is where coastal people meet, learn, read, share art, get ideas and grow.

A current offering of adult education classes at the library includes *Origins of the Human Mind*, *The Music of Wagner*, and *Finally Learn to Knit*. Free Tai chi classes are offered every Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the community room and book club meetings also take place in the well-used community room. Friends of the Library also partner with Gualala's *Independent Coast Observer* to publish *The Redwood Coast Review*, an award-winning quarterly literary newspaper with essays, reviews, poetry and photographs (available online at www.stephenkessler.com/rcr.html).

Many north coast residents would recognize Julia Larke at the front desk. She worked many years at the Fort Bragg Library and now is the one county employee and branch manager at the Point Arena library. Ms. Larke holds masters degrees in botany and library science and has worked for natural resources agencies in Texas and Louisiana. One of her jobs before moving to Mendocino County was

reference librarian at Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles. She also is editor of the local California Native Plant Society's newsletter. "I've mostly worked in academic libraries. I enjoy working in a public library, because I have an interest in lots of different things and public libraries offer so many riches." The Coast Community Library is a gem, she says, and the library volunteers are treasures.



Volunteer Paul Nordstrand at Coast Community Library circulation desk near branch's front door

The county provides library equipment and access to library resources in neighboring Sonoma and Lake Counties. It also pays the salary of the branch manager. The nonprofit Friends of the Coast Community Library (FoCCL) own the building, provide financial support and offer volunteer help that includes everything from sorting books to cleaning spider webs out of the ceiling of the restored 1928 building.

"Without our volunteers, we would not have a library, Alix Levine says. Ms. Levine, president of the FoCCL for many years, has helped guide the organization through negotiations to keep the library in the county system. Because of severe county budget cuts in the past few years, Friends have filled more and more voids for materials and subscriptions. But hard economic times have made it as difficult for Friends as it is for the county. So Friends lined up months ago to support County Measure A on the November ballot—a measure that will double the county library budget if approved by two-thirds of the vote. The measure would literally keep library doors open throughout the county—and that means everything to a city like Point Arena.

Ms. Levine wrote about the library crisis as long ago a year ago. In the Fall, 2010, issue of the

Continued on next page

Continued from Page 10

Redwood Coast Review, she wrote: “Friends groups are taking over payment for items that budget cuts no longer allow the County Library to pay for....and FoCCL is looking for new ways to raise funds to keep the library operating smoothly.”

laureate of Point Arena, had told him “We need a library.”

Everything happened quickly after that: Purchase of the old Gillmore Mercantile Building on Main

Street, renovation under the careful eye of Perkins, years of fundraising and grant proposal submissions and opening day Friday, November 5, 2004, after volunteers lined up like a fire brigade to transfer books by hand-to-hand down the street to the new library.

Ms. Levine says community volunteers and Parlin Fork Conservation Camp crews transformed the building to the airy, light library space it is today.

A group of nine citizens became the first Friends of the Coast Community Library in 1989, when the library was located in the social hall of a local church. The library then moved into an 850 square foot savings and loan building and it was bursting at the seams by the time it moved into the Gillmore Building down the street.



From left: Branch Manager Julia Larke, Friends President Alix Levine and Pearl Watts (Yes on Libraries campaign and former president of Friends of the Coast Community Library).

Renovating the former general store in the Gillmore Building into a modern library was a project architect Richard Perkins took on (he donated his time). Mr. Perkins, who died at age 85 in April, also worked on renovation of another 1928 building in town, the historic Arena Theater across the street from the library. His wife, Fionna Perkins, poet

It was a building with good bones that became the heart of the tiny city—the perfect home for a public library to fulfill Fionna Perkins’ dream and become the locale to fill the mission of the Coast Community Library: “To enrich the life of the local community through learning, information services, life-long education and the exchange of ideas.”



Library’s replica of 1913 Japanese fishing boat. The boat’s crew members were helped by local Pomo Indians when it landed at Point Arena. Descendants of grateful crew members, from the city of Yawatahama, honored the people of Point Arena a ceremonial fan displayed in the reading room.



Left: Current library exhibit of sea shells and miscellany from original general store.



2011-2012 Officers**Board of Directors**

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Calendar—2011 Meetings

- Tues., Oct. 4, 2011 Board Meeting
9:30 a.m. Fort Bragg Library
 - **Tues., Oct. 11, 2011 General Meeting**
C.V. Starr Center, 300 S. Lincoln, Fort Bragg
The November Election, Ballot Measures
County Library Measure A
9:30 a.m. coffee
10 a.m. meeting
 - **Tues., Nov. 15, 2011 (note 3rd Tuesday in Nov.)**
General Meeting 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
C.V. Starr Center, 300 S. Lincoln, Fort Bragg
9:30 a.m. coffee
10 a.m.-2 p.m. meeting (note—look for
lunch arrangements in November VOTER)
League Member Ken Matheson leads a
four-hour presentation and discussion
about the national LWV education study
 - **December-No General Meeting**
Happy Holidays
 - Tues., Dec. 13, 2011 Board Meeting
9:30 a.m., Fort Bragg Library
- Please Hold These Dates**
For 2012 Meetings
- **Tues., Jan. 10, 2012 General Meeting**
 - Tues., Feb. 7, 2012 Board Meeting
 - **Tues., Feb. 14, 2012 General Meeting**
 - **Fri., Mar. 16, 2012—Meet and Greet Your Elected Officials**
 - Tues., Apr. 3, 2012 Board Meeting
 - **Tues., Apr. 10, 2012 General Meeting**
 - **Tues., May 8, 2012—Annual Business Meeting, Board Election**
 - Tues., June 5, 2012 Board Meeting-tentative

All General Meetings open to the public
All Board Meetings open to members

*One Last Thought:***What Does Your County Public Library Card Get You?**

Your free county public library card can be obtained at any county library branch (Covelo, Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Point Arena or Willits). With that card, you can borrow materials from any of these branches and return them to any branch. Materials also can be borrowed from Lake or Sonoma Counties and returned to your nearest Mendocino County branch.

Other privileges:

- Download audio books
- Check out DVDs, CDs
- Search the library catalog online and access databases by using your library card number (NewsBank, Inc.; ProQuest newspaper database; Learning Express Library and Job & Career Accelerator; Bookflix (literacy resource that reinforces early reading skills) and Ebsco Research (student reference center for magazine articles plus an online source for automobile repair)

**The League of Women Voters
of Mendocino County**
P.O. Box 1128
Fort Bragg, CA 95437
707 937-4952

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